

**LOPERs General Studies Program  
First-Year Seminar (LOPER 1) Submission Instructions**

GSC approval: February 16, 2021

This document describes the approval process, submission procedures, and evaluation criteria used by the General Studies Council (GSC) to evaluate First-Year Seminar (LOPER 1) proposals for inclusion in UNK's LOPERs General Studies Program.

**First-Year Seminar (LOPER 1) Approval Process**

First-Year Seminar proposals are submitted electronically to the Director of General Studies ([general.studies@unk.edu](mailto:general.studies@unk.edu)). First-Year Seminar proposals are presented to the Council at a regularly scheduled meeting. If the proposal meets established criteria, then the Council votes to approve dissemination of the proposal to campus; if not, the Council can either reject the proposal or return it for revision and resubmission. Upon approval for dissemination, the Director of General Studies posts the proposal on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization, inviting campus comments on the proposal via discussion forum for a minimum of two weeks. The Council then votes on the proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Council-approved proposals are forwarded to the SVCASA for final approval. Approved First-Year Seminars go into effect in the following semester if all three proposing programs have -126 courses approved in the relevant academic catalog.

***Note: the approval process takes time. To facilitate the process, make sure submitted proposals are complete and allow adequate time for revisions. Departments are strongly encouraged to consult with a General Studies Council member during preparation of a proposal. First-Year Seminar proposals must be reviewed by a General Studies Council member prior to submission.***

**Course Submission Procedures**

First-Year Seminar proposals consist of three parts: **Part 1: First-Year Seminar Proposal Checklist; Part 2: First-Year Seminar Information; and Part 3: First-Year Seminar Syllabus.** *The proposal must be reviewed by a Council member prior to its submission.*

Completed proposals must be submitted electronically to the General Studies Office ([general.studies@unk.edu](mailto:general.studies@unk.edu)); an incomplete proposal will be returned to the submitter. Please use Word file format for all proposals.

The Course Proposal Checklist (below) should be used to verify that the proposal includes all the required information; the completed checklist must be signed by the reviewing GSC member and submitted with Parts 2 and 3 of the proposal.

**Part 1: First-Year Seminar Proposal Checklist**

Note: Checkmark boxes in the table below can be marked electronically. Marking “yes” affirms that Parts 2 and 3 of your proposal include the required information and that information is complete.

Have a Council member review the proposal and sign the checklist, confirming that the proposal is complete. Include the signed checklist with Parts 2 and 3 of your proposal when you submit it.

<b>Proposal includes required Course Information (Part 2):</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Basic course information (prefix, number, title, and credit hrs.; catalog description) The course number for all three sections is 126, each section is 1 credit for a total of 3 credits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposing departments and contact individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of GS course: <input type="checkbox"/> Existing course, new to GS; OR <input type="checkbox"/> Newly-created course <sup>1</sup>	
Department assurance (from all departments) that all sections will be taught consistent with submitted syllabus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department assurance (from all departments) that all sections will meet all LOPER 1 category learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department assurance (from all departments) that all instructors will participate in GS Program assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department assurance (from all departments) regarding team members	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOPER category	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning outcomes for LOPER 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed explanation / evidence of how course will achieve the learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear explanation of the common issue or problem to be approached from the particular perspective of each individual discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear explanation of how the seminar approaches the issue or problem from multiple disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Proposal includes Course Syllabus with required contents (Part 3):</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Syllabus includes all required Basic Course Information for all three -126 courses <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Syllabus includes all required General Studies Program Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Syllabus includes all required Course and University Policy Information <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>College GS Council member reviewing the proposal:</b>	

<sup>1</sup> For a newly-created course, the proposal also must include documentation of submission for approval through the Academic Affairs process.

<sup>2</sup> The submitted syllabus may use headings or spaces for instructor-specific information and omit those details.

<sup>3</sup> The submitted syllabus should include examples of the course policies that are required to be included in a syllabus, but it should indicate which of those are instructor-specific and which are common to all sections/instructors of the seminar.

Name (please print):
Signature:

## Part 2: Course Information

### A. Basic submission information:

1. Course prefixes and number (all sections of First-Year Seminars will be numbered 126)
2. Course title
3. Credit hours
4. Catalog description
5. Departments or programs that are proposing the First-Year Seminar's inclusion in the GS Program
6. Contact individuals (and their contact information)
7. Indicate if the proposed course is:
  - a. An existing UNK course that is being proposed for addition to the GS Program (include current GS courses being proposed for cross-listing in an additional LOPER category or to move to a different LOPER category), or
  - b. A newly-created course (NOTE: For a newly-created course, the proposal also must include documentation of submission for approval through the Academic Affairs process. The Council will not vote on final approval of a new course until it has been approved by the FS Academic Affairs Committee.)

### B. Department assurance statements:

The Council relies on chairs and departments to act in good faith in delivering General Studies courses once they are approved for inclusion in the Program. The Council also depends on instructors (including visiting and adjunct faculty) to cooperate in collecting and reporting data on student performance, and to provide the Council with information on how their GS courses are being taught, so the Council can assess the Program's effectiveness.

Accordingly, we require that the proposal includes assurances from the department on all of the following:

1. *All sections of the course will be taught in a manner consistent with the submitted syllabus.* Reasonable instructor freedom to select assigned texts/materials, craft assignments, and adopt their own course policies is, of course, permitted.
2. *All sections of the course will meet all learning outcomes for the LOPER category (or categories, where applicable) for which the course is approved.*
3. *All instructors will participate in GS Program assessment.* Courses approved to meet LOPER categories will be scheduled for assessment in rotating semesters; this schedule will be announced to campus and posted on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization. Instructors are responsible to collect the requested data and report it to the GS Director by the established deadline. Instructors also are responsible to submit their GS course syllabi to the Council upon request.
4. *All departments assure that if the instructors for any of the sections change, the department guarantees that the new instructor is qualified to teach the disciplinary contents for the seminar's problem and committed to engage with the other instructors in a team-taught approach. The department also will consult with the other instructors regarding who is being added to their team.*

### C. Suitability for the GS Program:

1. Indicates that this is a proposal for the LOPER 1: First Year Seminar category

2. List the learning outcomes for LOPER 1 (*see Appendix*).
3. Explain clearly and in detail how all three -126 courses meet each learning outcome and how student achievement of those outcomes will be demonstrated. In other words, specify the course contents and the types of activities and assignments that enable students to develop and to exhibit the applicable skills. To obtain approval, a course must meet all learning outcomes for the LOPER 1 category.
4. Identify clearly the common issue or problem to be approached from the particular perspective of each discipline.
5. Explain clearly how the seminar approaches the issue or problem from multiple disciplines. In other words, demonstrate how the three co-requisite sections are integrated into one multidisciplinary, team-taught seminar.

### **Part 3: Course Syllabus**

All GS course syllabi must include, at minimum, the following information.

#### **Basic Course Information Required:**

NOTE: The submitted syllabus may use headings or spaces for section- or instructor-specific information and omit those details.

Course identifiers:

- Course prefixes, number (include section number, where applicable), and title
- Class meeting times and places

Instructor information:

- Instructor names
- Instructor contacts (office location, phone number, and e-mail address)
- Instructor office hours

Course information:

- Required text / course materials (to be purchased or made available on Canvas?)
- Course prerequisites (where applicable)
- Course description (from the undergraduate catalog)

#### **General Studies Program Information Required:**

- A statement that the course is a General Studies course, including **its LOPER category** (e.g., HIST 210 is a General Studies course that meets the LOPER 6 (Humanities) broad knowledge requirement).
- The **purpose statement** for General Studies (*see Appendix*)
- The **program objective** for the course's LOPER category (*see Appendix*)
- The specific **learning outcomes** for the course's LOPER category (*see Appendix*).
- An **explanation of how the course enables students to achieve those learning outcomes**. In other words, link the abstract outcomes to the course's activities and assignments (e.g., [Outcomes a-b])

will be achieved by finding sources and summarizing their arguments in the assigned research paper).

**Course and University Policy Information Required:**

NOTE: The submitted syllabus should include examples of the course policies that are required to be included in a syllabus, but it should indicate which of those are instructor-specific and which are common to all sections/instructors of the course.

- **Course outline:** include a tentative schedule of exams, major assignments, and events such as papers, projects, field trips, and presentations.
- **Grading information:** include both the components of the course grade and their weights, and the grading scale for course grades, specifying how many points or what percentage is required for each letter grade.
- **Course policy / expectations:** include attendance, class participation, late assignments, and conduct. Instructor policies on e-mail communications and use of technology in the classroom are recommended but not required.
- **Academic integrity:** include at least a reference or link to UNK's Academic Integrity policy and state the instructor's policy/penalties for academic dishonesty.
- **Other University policy statements:** include reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and those who are pregnant; reporting sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual assault; and diversity & inclusion. (Update as needed each semester to include the latest policy statements.)

**Evaluation Criteria**

The General Studies Council will evaluate proposals based on the following considerations:

- Does the proposal include all the required parts and information in sufficient detail for the Council to determine the course's suitability for inclusion in the LOPERs Program?
- Is the course appropriate for new learners and non-majors?
- Is the seminar being proposed from three different disciplines with at least two different departments?
- Does the seminar present a multidisciplinary, team-taught approach to an issue or problem?
- Does the proposal establish that students who take the seminar will be able to achieve the applicable learning outcomes?
- Does the syllabus communicate to students the LOPER 1 learning outcomes, how they will be achieved, and how the seminar fits into the General Studies Program as a whole?

**APPENDIX: LOPERs General Studies Program Categories & Learning Outcomes**

NOTE: Courses must meet all learning outcomes in their category

**Purpose of General Studies:** The UNK LOPERs General Studies Program helps students to develop core academic skills in collecting and using information, communications in speech and writing, and quantitative reasoning (LOPERs 1-4); to acquire broad knowledge in a variety of disciplines across the

arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (LOPERs 5-8); and to instill dispositions that prepare students to lead responsible and productive lives in a democratic, multicultural society (LOPERs 9-11).

**FOUNDATIONAL REQUIREMENTS (LOPERs 1-4):**

**Program Objective:** Courses are designed for students to develop core academic skills in collecting and using information, communications in speech and writing, and quantitative reasoning.

**LOPER 1 (First-Year Seminar) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can locate and select appropriate sources of information (to include information important to academic and professional success)
- b. Can discern a source's argument or purpose and audience
- c. Can summarize a source's main points accurately and fairly
- d. Can evaluate and use sources appropriately and responsibly
- e. Can integrate information from multiple sources and contrasting viewpoints

**LOPER 2 (Writing Skills) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can discern a writer's argument or purpose
- b. Can evaluate and use sources appropriately and responsibly
- c. Can use context-appropriate conventions in writing
- d. Can communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and context

**LOPER 3 (Oral Communication Skills) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can discern a speaker's argument or purpose
- b. Can evaluate and use sources appropriately and responsibly
- c. Can use context-appropriate conventions in speech and non-verbal expressions
- d. Can form and support a coherent position
- e. Can communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and context

**LOPER 4 (Mathematics, Statistics, and Quantitative Reasoning) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can describe problems using mathematical, statistical, or programming language
- b. Can solve problems using mathematical, statistical, or programming techniques
- c. Can construct logical arguments using mathematical, statistical, or programming concepts
- d. Can interpret and express numerical data or graphical information using mathematical, statistical, or programming concepts and methods

**BROAD KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS (LOPERs 5-8):**

**Program Objective:** Courses are designed for students to acquire broad knowledge in a variety of disciplines across the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences.

**LOPER 5 (Visual or Performing Arts) Learning Outcomes**

Students can: Evaluate and/or create cultural products in a discipline of the visual or performing arts

- a. Can interpret a work of art within its cultural or historical context
- b. Can characterize and evaluate a work of art using concepts appropriate to its medium
- c. Can distinguish between works of art from various schools, time periods, and/or cultures
- d. Can articulate the significance of the arts for themselves or for society

**LOPER 6 (Humanities) Learning Outcomes**

Students can: Explain and evaluate ideas and/or social and cultural conditions using the concepts and methods in a humanities discipline

- a. Can analyze primary sources appropriate to the humanities discipline
- b. Can compare and contrast theories, narratives, or social/cultural conditions
- c. Can make and support an argument about the human experience
- d. Can articulate the significance of the humanities for themselves or for society

**LOPER 7 (Social Science) Learning Outcomes**

Students can: Explain and evaluate human behavior and/or social systems using the concepts and methods in a social science discipline

- a. Can use the discipline's concepts and methods to explain human behavior and/or social systems
- b. Can investigate problems and analyze evidence using the discipline's concepts and methods
- c. Can make and support an argument about human behavior or social systems using social-scientific evidence
- d. Can articulate the significance of social scientific knowledge for themselves or for society

**LOPER 8 (Natural Science) Learning Outcomes**

Students can: Solve problems and evaluate conclusions using the concepts and methods in a natural science discipline (may include a lab component)

- a. Can use the discipline's concepts and methods to explain natural or physical phenomena
- b. Can investigate problems and analyze evidence using appropriate scientific methodology
- c. Can make and support an argument based on sound scientific principles
- d. Can articulate the significance of scientific knowledge for themselves or for society

**DISPOSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (LOPERs 9-11):**

**Program Objective:** Courses are designed to instill dispositions that prepare students to lead responsible and productive lives in a democratic, multicultural society.

**LOPER 9 (Civic Competency & Engagement) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can identify issues of public or community concern and problems or challenges posed by lack of civic competency and engagement.
- b. Can gather and evaluate sufficient and reliable information about issues of public concern and have the knowledge and skills to make reasonable judgements and decisions about them
- c. Can evaluate practices and decisions for their civic consequences
- d. Can articulate the importance of community service and civic engagement to address issues of public or community concern

**LOPER 10 (Respect for Human Diversity) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can describe the nature and consequences of human diversity
- b. Can gather and evaluate information important for relating to diverse populations
- c. Can evaluate practices and decisions for their impacts on inequality or inclusivity
- d. Can articulate the significance of human diversity for themselves or for society

**LOPER 11 (Wellness) Learning Outcomes**

- a. Can articulate the importance of the eight domains of wellness (emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social wellness).
- b. Can describe the impact of social factors, and personal decisions and behaviors, on wellness.



- c. Can gather and evaluate information about wellness and apply to personal behavior choices or decisions.
- d. Can integrate information from multiple sources and contrasting viewpoints to make an informed and educated decision regarding wellness.