

What Constitutes a GE Course?

Approved by GERS August 8, 2018; revised October 22, 2018; revised November 1, 2018

Rationale

GERS had the following goals for revising the definition and operation of lower-division and upper-division GE courses:

- Creating a meaningful program of general education with clear differences between lower- and upper-division GE.
- Improve student access to courses, removing roadblocks to getting into GE courses.
- Distinguish between GE and major courses.
- Build in assessment of GE learning outcomes (see separate document on GELOs)
- Support faculty learning communities around general education themes, pedagogies, and assessment without creating an undue burden on faculty

Policy

- I. All GE courses must
 - A. Meet at least 3 GE Program Learning Outcomes.
 - B. Meet the Course Approval Criteria for the relevant GE Area.
 - C. Be 3 or fewer units, except for Upper Division courses specified in “Met-in-Major” section below. The GE Subcommittee, EPC, and Academic Programs may also approve exceptions based on availability of 3-unit seats in the relevant GE area(s) and on the standard CSU, California community college, and nationwide practices for teaching the relevant subject matter.
 - D. Be suitable for students regardless of major.
 - E. Include a signature assignment that can be mapped to the identified GE Learning Outcomes and which will be assessed using GELO rubrics and must be made available to the GE Assessment committee along with student artifacts.
 - F. GE courses, including assessment data and faculty/department participation, are subject to review as part of the GE Program Review process.
- II. In addition to these general requirements, all lower-division GE courses must
 - A. Be introductory in nature (numbered 100-299) and promote exploration.

- B. Explicitly describe to students the ways in which this course is disciplinary/reflects its discipline.
 - C. Require no special prerequisites, unless the course is part of a specific course sequence approved by the GE subcommittee. Examples of such sequences might include high school pattern requirements and introductory language courses. In addition, a lower-division GE may require completion of one or more of the Golden 4 GE areas (A1, A2, A3, and B4).
 - D. Departments may not ordinarily reserve seats in lower-division courses. Departments should consult with Academic Programs and EPC to request exceptions to this provision and determine how to communicate those exceptions clearly.
 - E. Recommended: Every faculty member teaching in lower-division GE must participate in a designated GE professional development workshop or faculty learning community prior to the beginning of the first semester teaching a GE course in the new program.
- III. In addition to the general requirements, all UDGE courses must
- A. Be numbered 300-499.
 - B. Be open to students in all programs, except as specified in “Met-in-Major” GE below. Other than met-in-major courses, upper-division GE courses may not be restricted to specific programs.
 - C. Must have prerequisites of the Golden 4; the Lower-Division GE in the same GE area as the course being taken; and at least 45 units. Departments should not impose additional prerequisites unless the course is part of a specific course sequence (e.g. language courses) as approved by the GE subcommittee or is Met-in-Major.
 - D. Include the “Integrative Learning” outcome among the-GE Learning Outcomes addressed by the course.
 - E. Have an explicitly integrative component. For example, this component may integrate multiple disciplinary perspectives; connect classroom and community/real-world learning; integrate theory and practice, etc.
 - F. Include a reflection assignment that asks students to integrate knowledge gained in lower-division GE courses and reflect on the learning they have done across those GE courses. This assignment may be the same as or different from the

signature assignment, and must be made available to the GE Assessment committee along with student artifacts.

- G. Every faculty member teaching in upper-division GE participate in a designated GE professional development workshop or faculty learning community prior to the beginning of the first semester teaching a GE course in the new program.
- IV. Students may double-count UDGE courses to satisfy both GE and major/minor requirements.
- V. Programs may designate specific courses in the major that satisfy UDGE for majors only.
- A. These “Met-in-Major” UDGE courses
 1. Must meet all of the requirements for UDGE courses in terms of learning outcomes, integration, assignments, assessment, and professional development.
 2. May be restricted to majors/minors or hold a significant number of seats for majors/minors.
 3. May exceed 3 units.
 4. Must enforce, at a minimum, the prerequisites required of other upper-division GE courses. May have additional prerequisites beyond this minimum.
 5. Will not be listed in the GE pattern visible to all students.
 6. May double-count for the major/minor and GE.
 - B. Programs may choose at most one GE area (B, C, or D) in which to offer met-in-major UDGE courses (students may only take up to 3 units as met-in-major per major). This does not preclude departments from offering UDGE courses that are open to all students in any GE Area (B, C, D) for which the course meets the Course Approval Criteria and the requirements above.
 - C. The “Met-in-Major” UDGE course program will be subject to review at the next GE Program Review (in 2022-23). At that time, the GE subcommittee and EPC will make a determination about whether to continue this part of the UDGE program, or to have all UDGE open to all students regardless of major. This decision will be based on assessment data from this program, including a study of how the GE experience and outcomes are affected by the mix of disciplines represented among the students.

Changelog

Changes: Nov 2, 2018

Section I-C: Clarified criteria for exceptions to the requirement that GE courses be 3 units.

Faculty professional development for LD GE (Section II-E) and UD GE (Section III-G) clarified: each faculty member should do professional development ONCE, not once per semester or once per course.

Changes: Oct. 19, 2018

All GE courses (Section 1)

- I-A: “at least 3-5 GE learning outcomes” => “at least 3 GE Program learning outcomes”
- Added explicit 3-unit limit, with exception of UDGE met-in-major

LD GE

- II-C: Edits for clarification on exceptions to prerequisite pattern and elaboration of Golden 4.
- II-D: Language about reserving seats for specific programs and populations modified. Minimum of 50% seats restricted reduced to 0.

UD GE

- III-C: Removed reference to “3-5 learning outcomes”

Sections IV and V on UDGE combined.

Met in major

- Added “May exceed 3 units”
- Added explicit enumeration of allowable prerequisites for Met-in-Major GE