

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES AREA DESIGNATIONS –CRITERIA AND GOALS

(revised July 2003, accepted March 2004)

General education courses at Oklahoma State University provide students with general knowledge, skills, and attitudes conducive to lifelong learning in a complex society. Specifically, general education at Oklahoma State University is intended to:

- Construct a broad foundation for the student’s specialized course of study,
- Develop the student’s ability to read, observe, and listen with comprehension,
- Enhance the student’s skills in communicating effectively,
- Expand the student’s capacity for critical analysis and problem solving,
- Assist the student in understanding and respecting diversity in people, beliefs, and societies, and
- Develop the student’s ability to appreciate and function in the human and natural environment.

Every general education course is aligned with one of four content areas: analytical and quantitative thought (A), humanities (H), social and behavioral sciences (S), and natural sciences (N). In addition, OSU students must participate in an international dimension course (I) and in natural sciences courses that include a lab component and have a scientific investigation (L) designation. A course is qualified to be part of the general education curriculum if it meets the needs of students in all disciplines without requiring extensive specialized skills and satisfies all the criteria for a specific general education area. The criteria for each general education area follow.

General Education Area Designations*

***All goals listed under each designation must be met for a course to receive that designation.**

ANALYTICAL AND QUANTITATIVE THOUGHT - (A)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated “A” incorporate the study of systems of logic and the mathematical sciences.
- b. Courses designated “A” will place primary emphasis on the development of the intellect through inductive and/or deductive processes. Their aim should be broader than proficiency in techniques and should include appreciation of how the processes can supplement intuition and provide ways to analyze concrete problems.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will critically analyze and solve problems using quantitative, geometric, or logical models.
- b. Students will form inferences using logical systems and mathematical information and communicate them in writing.

- c. Students will give appropriate multiple representations (symbolical, visual, graphical, numerical, or verbal) of logical or mathematical information.
- d. Students will estimate, analyze, or check solutions to problems to determine reasonableness, alternative solutions, or to determine optimal methods or results.

HUMANITIES - (H)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated "H" concentrate on the expression, analysis, and interpretation of ideas and the aesthetics or values that have formed and informed individuals and societies.
- b. Courses designated "H" emphasize the diversity in the expression of human ideas and aesthetic or cultural values.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will critically analyze the relationships of aesthetics, ideas, or cultural values to historic and contemporary cultures.
- b. Students will develop an understanding of how ideas, events, arts, or texts shape diverse individual identities.
- c. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills; upper division "H" courses will include extensive written work.¹

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES - (S)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated "S" propose theoretical constructs to explain human behavior and society in social and/or physical environments.
- b. Courses designated "S" are normally based on empirical observation of human behavior rather than the study of aesthetics, ideas, or cultural values.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will critically analyze generalizations about society and explore theoretical structures.
- b. Students will understand the role of empirical observation in the social and behavioral sciences.
- c. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills; upper division "S" courses will include extensive written work.¹

NATURAL SCIENCES - (N)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated “N” feature the systematic study of natural processes and the mechanisms and consequences of human intervention in those processes.
- b. Courses designated “N” place primary emphasis on the subject matter of one or more basic physical or biological sciences in a broadly integrative fashion.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will understand the scientific inquiry process.
- b. Students will critically analyze the physical world using the language and concepts of science.
- c. Students will use the methodologies and models of science to select, define, solve, and evaluate problems in biological and physical sciences.
- d. Students will evaluate evidence, interpretations, results, and solutions related to the physical and biological sciences.
- e. Students will understand the consequences of human intervention in natural processes and mechanisms.
- f. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work appropriate to the discipline that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills.²

CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL CULTURES - (I)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated “I” emphasize contemporary – the current time in the context of the discipline - cultures outside the United States. Courses concerning ethnic and cultural minorities within the U.S. do not qualify.
- b. At least one-half of the course materials must relate to contemporary, not historical, cultures.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will critically analyze one or more contemporary cultures external to the United States.
- b. Students will understand how contemporary international cultures relate to complex, modern world systems.
- c. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills; upper division “I” courses will include extensive written work.¹

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION - (L)

1. Criteria:

- a. Courses designated “L” must include the equivalent of at least one semester credit hour of laboratory experience aimed at interpreting scientific hypotheses.
- b. Courses designated “L” emphasize scientific inquiry and experimental methodology.

2. Goals:

- a. Students will critically analyze scientific problems, formulate hypotheses, conduct appropriate experiments, and interpret results.
- b. Students will solve problems using scientific inquiry and experimental methodology.
- c. Students will communicate procedures, results and conclusions to others.
- d. Students will demonstrate their understanding through written work appropriate to the discipline that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills.²

Effective August 2004, all new requests for General Education designations must meet criteria and goals in this document. However, courses with approved General Education designations that meet all criteria and goals except the writing requirements will retain the General Education designation. When the General Education Advisory Council reviews the course in three years or when course modifications are submitted, the course must satisfy all criteria and goals, including the writing requirements, to retain the General Education designation.

¹The writing requirement for H, S and I courses is defined as follows:

Lower division courses - outside of class writing assignments appropriate to the discipline that are graded with feedback on writing. Minimum of 5 pages of writing assignments during semester.

Upper division courses - outside of class writing assignments that give students the opportunity to incorporate feedback in subsequent writing assignments (by revising and resubmitting one assignment or submitting more than one assignment). Minimum of 10 pages of writing assignments during semester.

²Faculty who teach “N” and “L” courses will describe writing assignments that are appropriate to the discipline.