GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The General Education Committee is currently reviewing the General Education and Additional College Requirements. This outlines current criteria and objectives for 2015-2016.

SPECIFIC DEFINING CRITERIA FOR FACULTY APPLICATIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATION OF COURSES

The following criteria are the principal guide used to approve courses for the General Education Program. The course proposal application requires faculty to demonstrate, point by point, how a course meets each of the following criteria. You will also be asked to demonstrate how you propose to assess student learning of the SUNY learning outcomes through your course. Departments and faculty members interested in applying for a General Education designator must complete the application and submit all requested materials as outlined on the form.

Application forms are available in the Faculty section of the General Education web site, http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/, or from Patty Stone, Administrative Assistant for General Education, Office of Academic Affairs, Raymond Hall 712, Ext. 2108.

General Education Foundations (GEF)

GEF courses should be offered at the lower division level.

A. COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE: (2 courses; minimum of 4 credits)

1. [FW] FIRST-YEAR WRITING (1 course, 3 credits)

Preamble: The FW course teaches the composition of sound and effective written arguments suitable for academic contexts. The course should encourage student writers to think critically as they develop logical, complex arguments, and to develop a repertoire of skills in invention, drafting, revision, and editing.

Knowledge Areas: Develop the following understandings about writers and writing:
   a. Writers make diverse choices, depending on audience, occasion, and experience.
   b. Writers consider the ways that language permits communication, shapes thought and changes over time.
   c. Discussion, debate, research, and inquiry can be a source of growth and challenge for writers.
   d. Most significant issues are complex and often contain competing perspectives, which must be weighed and considered when constructing written arguments.
Skills addressed: Strengthen the following abilities:

a. Read using analytical and evaluative skills necessary for effective development of written argument.
   - read and respond to a wide variety of written texts that demand close attention; accurately represent the ideas and information in those texts through paraphrase, summary, and synthesis
   - raise questions, mark a text, take reading notes, and create outlines
   - analyze, at a level appropriate for first-year students, how published writers construct arguments

b. Use composing skills that support thoughtful planning, drafting, and revising.
   - apply a variety of invention techniques
   - create multiple drafts in order to strengthen both argument and language
   - revise for significance, focus, precision, conciseness, and liveliness
   - consider the responses of actual readers

c. Use writing to construct, and to present, strong arguments.
   - frame and analyze problems
   - analyze and address the perspective of intended readers
   - develop and evaluate claims
   - develop evidence to support claims and properly document that evidence when appropriate

d. Develop coherence in written texts.
   - establish a purpose for each written text that is clear and consistent throughout
   - create sentences and paragraphs that grow and build on each other in a logical progression
   - develop clear relationships among all points, striving for internal consistency

e. Develop Information Literacy skills
   - use a general periodical database effectively
   - complete designated tutorials and quizzes linked off the College’s Library website.
   - Practice using a Research Log

Assignments:

a. Complete at least four papers (3-5 pages each) incorporating elements of the writing process, with commentary from the instructor both in the working draft stage and on the submitted final draft. Peer critique is encouraged, as are opportunities to practice library research and the integration and documentation of source material.

b. Complete online Information Literacy tutorials and quizzes (details at http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal).

2. [FS] SPEAKING, REASONING AND RESEARCH (minimum of 1 credit)

An FS course may combine with a maximum of one Mode of Inquiry course, but may not combine with another First-year Experience course (i.e., FW, FS, FM) and may not combine with a college requirement designated PE, WI, or SI. FS courses carrying more than 3 credit hours must combine with a Mode of Inquiry course.
**Knowledge area:** Discipline based knowledge.

**Skills:** Improve students' ability to:

a. develop clear and focused thesis statements that are appropriate for the time allocated, the audience, and the occasion;

b. outline a speech with a clear thesis statement, main points, and sub-points;

c. identify demographic and situational factors that a speaker needs to know about an audience;

d. understand the role of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, testimony) in developing a logical argument;

e. understand the role of speaker credibility (ethos) and emotional/motivational appeals (pathos) in building support for a speaker's ideas;

f. communicate in both verbal and nonverbal dimensions of delivery;

g. recognize the similarities and differences between informative and persuasive speaking;

h. recognize the similarities and differences between written and oral communication;

i. recognize and practice ethical oral communication (emphasizing intellectual integrity of ideas, their accurate presentation, and proper citation).

j. use the library catalog.

**Exercises:**

1. Two five-minute speeches to the class (one informative, one persuasive). Each speech should be based on a formal, preparatory outline with bibliography, and delivered using brief speaker notes. At least one of the speeches should require students to cite outside sources in support of their ideas and/or arguments.

2. Complete online Information Literacy tutorials and quizzes (details at [http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal](http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal)).

3. Faculty are encouraged to require additional graded or ungraded speaking experiences; to require a critical essay to help students understand the differences between oral and written communication; and to require students to incorporate presentational aids in at least one of their speeches.

---

**B. QUANTITATIVE EXPERIENCE [FM] (1 course, minimum of 3 credits)**

**4. [FM] MATHEMATICAL**

**Knowledge Area:** Introduces quantitative methods and strengthens reasoning skills needed to respond with greater sophistication in a complex technological world.

Students will show competence in the following quantitative reasoning skills:

- arithmetic;
- algebra;
- geometry;
- data analysis; and
- quantitative reasoning.
Skills: Strengthen students' ability to:
   a. collect, analyze, and interpret numerical data or information
   b. interpret and generate tables, graphs, and charts;
   c. understand that numerical data is open to multiple interpretations and that numbers are not "neutral" symbols.
   d. represent phenomena of the physical world in abstract, symbolic form;
   e. identify and use symbols and mathematical operations to algebraically represent a complex phenomenon of the physical world and to test the adequacy of the representation;
   f. use of abstract models to describe or explain phenomena, systems, or processes and to be aware that acceptance of a given model changes the perception of the physical world;
   g. estimate, approximate, and recognize the reasonableness of results;
   h. convert information into one or more formal notation systems and to manipulate elements within that notation system;
   i. understand logical and symbolic relationships;
   j. recognize appropriate and inappropriate uses of quantification and critically evaluate a number-based argument.

C. CRITICAL THINKING EXPERIENCE [FC] (minimum of 1 credit)

[FC] CRITICAL THINKING

An FC course may combine with a maximum of one Mode of Inquiry course, but may not combine with another First-year Experience course (i.e., FW, FS, FM); and may not combine with a college requirement designated PE, WI, or SI. FC courses carrying more than 3 credit hours should combine with a Mode of Inquiry course.

Knowledge area: Discipline based

Introduces the standards of good reasoning and strengthens basic reasoning skills. Major course objectives shall include oral and written practice to develop the following abilities: (1) identify the main question, problem, or claim in discourse, and think through it in a critical, creative manner according to the standards of good reasoning, that is, the rules of argument; (2) model the critical thinking processes, or patterns, in the humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences; and (3) self-consciously apply the standards of critical thinking.

Skills:
   1. Identify the issue or question.
      • Understand what considerations are relevant to the issue or question.
      • Know who bears the burden of proof.
   2. Identify the logical structure of arguments:
      • Identify the conclusion.
• Identify the explicit premises and the implicit premises or assumptions the argument requires for its conclusion to follow.
• Identify the evidence offered to support the premises.
3. Evaluate arguments and counterarguments, competing hypotheses, or rival explanations:
   • Determine whether the conclusion follows from the premises.
   • Consider whether all the premises are true, and relevant.
   • Evaluate the supporting evidence, data, models, concepts, experimental design, or the reliability of the source providing evidence.
   • Develop skill in formulating counter-examples, alternative explanations, or conceptual models that may account for the evidence, data, etc.
   • Recognize informal fallacies.
4. Use the above standards to construct and evaluate one's own arguments.

Exercises:
1. Classroom exercises with oral practice involving as many students as possible.
2. Short written assignments, and
3. Complete online Information Literacy tutorials and quizzes (details at http://potsdam.libguides.com/tutorialsportal).