

COMMON CURRICULUM PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

[Adopted by the General Education Board on 15 July 2013]

III. COMMON CURRICULUM CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

III.A. EXPLANATION

Previous assessment processes, such as they were, essentially assessed whether, say, a literature course was really teaching literature through micro-level assessment using five or six different learning outcomes. The same was true for all of the requirements in the Common Curriculum, creating a situation in which hundreds and hundreds of students had to be assessed across fifty or sixty individual learning outcomes in many dozens of courses. Collectively, faculty faced a situation where they would have been asked to produce thousands of individual assessments across the vast majority of courses producing a mountain of indigestible data for its own sake. That approach fails the expectations of Middle States regarding usability and cost-effectiveness.

We rejected such an approach in favour of assessing common outcomes built around the essential purposes of the program expressed through the breadth of analytical traditions in the Liberal Arts. Courses have been and will continue to be approved for inclusion in the Common Curriculum during the ordinary course proposal process. The instructor must satisfactorily explain both 1) how Common Learning Outcomes will be embedded in the course and 2) how the course meets some or all of the Category Content Requirements. Assessment will address the program-wide Common Learning Outcomes, not category content requirements that must be met up-front for course approval.

III.B. CATEGORY CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

The following content requirements must be met before a course will be approved for Common Curriculum credit. They are adapted from draft learning outcomes developed between 2006 and 2011 (that can be found in the Program Archive portion of the Common Curriculum website).

LITERATURE (HUL) Content Requirements

A Literature course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Read critically some of the important works and modes of world literature; works of literature are narrowly defined here to mean traditional written texts such as books, essays, pamphlets, or the like.
- Interpret literature through specific knowledge of literary traditions, literary devices, and critical approaches.

QUANTITATIVE AND MATHEMATICAL REASONING (QMR) Content Requirements

A Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Comprehend problems and express solutions using the language of mathematics, quantitative reasoning, and problem solving that requires rigorous logical demonstrations with multiple steps.

- Make use of symbolic and abstract representations and adapt non-trivial algorithms.

NATURAL SCIENCES WITH LAB (SCLB) Content Requirements

A Natural Sciences with Lab course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Understand how science and the scientific method work.
- Comprehend the difference between a hypothesis and a theory, how data are interpreted, and how hypotheses are formed.

HUMANITIES (HUM) Content Requirements

A Humanities course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Understand literary or philosophical texts and traditions and works and styles of art.
- Comprehend meaningful contexts, credible interpretations, and the pursuit of questions arising from the act of interpretation for such works.

SOCIAL SCIENCES (SOCS) Content Requirements

A Social Science course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Analyze the human experience (the behavior of and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, societies, or the natural environment) past and present.
- Develop an understanding of theories, concepts, methods, and ethical practices characteristic of particular disciplines in the social sciences.

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND TECHNOLOGY Content Requirements

A Science, Engineering, and Technology course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Develop an understanding of how foundational principles and methodologies in science, engineering, or technology are used to analyze and manipulate the natural and physical world.
- Evaluate evidence, results, and claims related to the impact of science, engineering, or technology on broader human or societal issues.

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY (LCC) Content Requirements

A Linguistic and Cultural Competency course, its equivalent in advanced foreign-language training, or greater familiarity with cultures gained through lived experiences will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Acquire a conscious and respectful recognition of cultural diversity and complexity within an understanding of our shared humanity.
- Better enable students as citizens of a global community to act across cultural boundaries justly, disinterestedly, and on the basis of human equality.