

THE **COMMON CURRICULUM**

Aaron Cass; Chair  
Academic Affairs Council  
26 May 2017

Colleagues,

Find here revised guidelines governing the completion of Common Curriculum requirements through study away, unanimously approved by the General Education Board and due to take effect as explained in 2018.

The revised guidelines restore the original relationship between study away and academic credit for CC requirements approved by the General Faculty when it approved our general education program in 2005.

Our existing guidelines directly and substantively deviate from the program approved by the General Faculty. The disjunction occurred through administrative processes with indeterminate involvement by the General Education Board; I am unable to find reference to the AAC and a vote of the General Faculty that approved the policy/program changes in the existing guidelines.

The practical effects of the revised guidelines below are minimal. They will not make it harder for Union students to participate in study away: they will make it harder for students to miss out on or avoid the depth and rigour of cultural learning that the General Faculty voted for in 2005. The revised guidelines will positively improve Union's academic programs and better enable Union students to become the engaged, ethical contributors in a complex global society described in our mission statement.

On Behalf of the General Education Board (Kristin Bidoshi, Division 1; Andy Feffer, Division 2; Christina Tonnesen-Friedman, Division 3; Bill Keat, Division 4; Joe Johnson, Writing Programs),



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# THE COMMON CURRICULUM

## Guidelines Governing Completion of Requirements through Study Away

[approved by the Gen Ed Board on 24 May 2017]

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

- Based on its review in 2016 and 2017, the Gen Ed Board by unanimous vote decided to restore the relationship between study away and LCC to what the General Faculty approved in 2005, namely a course-based/academic credit model.
- The revised guidelines respect two important objectives: 1) that International Programs should continue to create, develop, and administer study away programs to meet Union's broader mission and the intrinsic goals of study away. 2) that any coursework completed by students at Union College or elsewhere and used to fulfil Common Curriculum requirements meet the standards, content requirements, and learning outcomes for the program.
- The practice of a one-size-fits-all/blanket approval by which any full-term study away program fulfils both courses in the two-course Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement developed outside of the program as approved by the General Faculty. It was not considered best practice in 2005 and would not be viewed as such now; it does not respond appropriately to the diversity and heterogeneity of study away programs. For these reasons, the blanket approval practice will be discontinued.
- The revised guidelines will not make it harder for Union students to participate in study away: they will make it harder for students to miss out on or avoid the depth and rigour of cultural learning that the General Faculty voted for in 2005.
- **Full-term Study Away.** Beginning with programs offered in Fall 2018, students will henceforth use courses completed during full-term study away to fulfil the LCC requirement on the same basis as they use such courses to complete other CC requirements, as specified under the program approved by the General Faculty in 2005. Under that policy, individual courses can be used to complete these CC requirements: Literature (HUL), Arts and Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SOCS), Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR), Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB), and Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET). LCC will be simply restored to that list. ***For 2017-2018, all full-term study away programs will continue to carry blanket approval and no student accepted for those programs will be adversely affected by the revised guidelines.***
- **Mini-Terms.** Beginning with programs offered in Summer 2018, no mini-term (whether or not it has pre-departure and/or post-travel program-related activities) may be used to complete the entirety of the two-course LCC requirement. Mini-terms are currently credited as single 1.0 credit courses and carry LCC designations faculty may continue to submit mini-terms for additional CC designations.

**BACKGROUND.** Union College rightly points with pride to the opportunities for its students to study away from campus, to enrich their education and personal growth as global citizens through academic coursework and carefully planned, pedagogically sound experiential learning. Both in the current general education program, Union’s Common Curriculum, and its predecessor (General Education), students could fulfil requirements aimed at developing linguistic and cultural competency and understanding through study away. In General Education, students could fulfil the entire three-course ‘Other Cultures’ requirement simply by completing a full-term study away. In the Common Curriculum students currently fulfil the two-courses Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement by full-term study away; so-called mini-terms now allow students to complete one or both LCC courses. In addition, individual courses completed on full-term study away programs can be used to complete other requirements in the Common Curriculum. These requirements include: Literature (HUL), Arts and Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SOCS), Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR), Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB), and Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET). Guidelines can be found at: [https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/\\_documents/genedadvising12.0.pdf](https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/_documents/genedadvising12.0.pdf)

The college’s commitment to study away did not originate with the completion of general education requirements. Study away programs exist for their own, more-varied purposes. Programs allow students to concentrate in coursework for a major program of study, sample a wide variety of courses from a host institution (ideally allowing students to access coursework unavailable at Union College), or place themselves in a culturally immersive and intensive learning environment built on language study or more targeted themes and subjects. At the creation and adoption of General Education, the requisite individuals and governance bodies did not undertake a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the learning goals for the ‘Other Cultures’ requirements and course content of study away programs. Instead, the overlap between study away and the acquisition of linguistic competency or cultural understanding was assumed. This would no longer be considered best practice, either for developing and administering study away on its own or in its relationship to academic curricula and student learning outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

The creators of the Common Curriculum understood the problems with this kind of blanket approval: they did not carry it over into the program they submitted to the faculty. The November 2004 draft of that program did not include study away as a path to fulfil the LCC requirement. Following faculty and student input in 2005, the reform subcommittee added the following provision for completing LCC: ‘Term Abroad **courses** that deal with a cultural tradition outside the US’. They explained it as follows: ‘Term Abroad **courses** are an option here if these courses deal with cultural traditions outside the US. Other term abroad courses can count toward other general education requirements.’ They explained their response to student and faculty input:

In response, the subcommittee made explicit that **courses** taken on Terms Abroad would in most cases fulfill the Cultural and Linguistic [LCC] requirement, because those **courses** usually do deal

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<sup>1</sup> The literature on the subject is expansive, but two useful starting points include Michael Vande Berg, R. Michael Paige, Kris Hemming Lou (eds.), *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It* (Sterling, VA, 2012); Neal W. Sobania (ed.), *Putting the Local in Global Education: Models for Transformative Learning Through Domestic Off-Campus Programs* (Sterling, VA, 2015).

with a culture outside the US. In the unusual cases when students take **courses** not dealing with the culture and society of their host country on a Term Abroad, these **courses** would usually fulfill some other general education requirement or some major requirement for the students.<sup>2</sup>

The General Faculty approved the program (with these requirements) through the governance system in 2005.

In 2007, the Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies (with responsibility for general education) and the Gen Ed Board considered a request to eliminate the tie between academic course credit and completion of the LCC requirement. The request proposed that students complete LCC by a variety of additional options (similar to practices under the previous general education program with respect to 'Other cultures'). These included terms abroad and mini-terms. By Spring 2008, the Registrar's materials for Fall 2008 registration included the following for completion of LCC: 'Any full term abroad will satisfy both LCC requirement[s]. A mini-term satisfies both LCC requirements only if it is associated with an on-campus pre- and/or post-term seminar.' By Fall 2008, then, the connection between course-based academic credit for LCC approved by the General Faculty had been severed. This change to the program requirements occurred through administrative processes involving various deans, International Programs, the Registrar, assorted faculty members, and (indeterminately) the Gen Ed Board. To date, we can find no reference to the AAC (in its minutes) and a vote of the General Faculty that approved the policy/program changes in the current guidelines. Put simply, despite a vote to the contrary by the General Faculty in 2005, the college returned to a model of blanket approval for LCC and study away.<sup>3</sup>

In 2016 and 2017, the General Education Board examined and reviewed the current relationship between study away and the requirements in the Common Curriculum, with particular focus on the Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement. This review followed on from the Board's survey of faculty and students regarding the LCC requirement in April 2014 and the comprehensive review of all Common Curriculum requirements begun in 2015. The Board also followed on from the completion of the document 'A Union Education and International Programs' (July 2015) by the Director of International Programs. Our review took in all the information available to the campus community about general education programs, specific programs, review of course proposals and course syllabi, information from individual faculty and the International Programs Office, and meetings with the Director of International Programs. Three members of the Gen Ed Board have direct experience leading or directing one or more of Union's study abroad programs, have served on the Liaison Committee on Study Abroad (LCOSA), or worked directly with International Programs in other capacities. Finally, the current Common Curriculum Learning Outcomes and LCC content requirements guided our review: [https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/\\_documents/cca-programassessmentoverview.pdf](https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/_documents/cca-programassessmentoverview.pdf)

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<sup>2</sup> My emphasis throughout. The discussion document can be found at: The final proposal as voted on can be found at: <https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/program-administration/program-archive/> via the link 'Gen Ed Proposal' or as 'General Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'.

<sup>3</sup> Documents can be found at: [https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/\\_documents/lcstudyawaydocuments2007to2010.pdf](https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/_documents/lcstudyawaydocuments2007to2010.pdf)

**REVISED GUIDELINES.** The Gen Ed Board by unanimous vote decided to restore the relationship between study away and LCC to what the General Faculty actually approved in 2005, namely a course-based/academic credit model. The following revised and comprehensive guidelines will take effect beginning with mini-terms offered in summer 2018 and full-term study away programs offered in Fall 2018.

- **Full-term Study Away.** The one-size-fits-all/blanket approval by which any full-term study away program fulfils both courses in the two-course Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement will be discontinued. As specified under the program approved by the General Faculty in 2005, students will henceforth use courses completed during full-term study away to fulfil the LCC requirement on the same basis as they currently use such courses to complete other CC requirements. Under that policy, individual courses can be used to complete these CC requirements: Literature (HUL), Arts and Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SOCS), Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR), Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB), and Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET). LCC will be added to that list. **Please note, for 2017-2018, all full-term study away programs will continue to carry blanket approval and no student accepted for those programs will be adversely affected by the revised guidelines.**
- **Mini-terms.** Mini-terms are currently credited as single 1.0 credit courses and carry LCC designations. These guidelines will restore the course-based academic credit basis for completing CC requirements approved by the General Faculty in 2005. Students can continue to receive credit for one LCC course, per the provisions below.

The Common Curriculum guide on policies, administration and advising posted on the program website will be updated to include the following information. This information fully integrates the revised guidelines with existing policies and practices. We will work with International Programs and the Director of Advising to make this information easily and readily available beginning in Fall 2017:

#### **COMPLETING COMMON CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS THROUGH STUDY AWAY**

- Courses completed during a full-term study away program that are accepted for full course credit (1.0) by Union College may count toward the following CC requirements, as appropriate: HUL, HUM, LCC, SOCS, QMR, SCLB, SET.
  - a) Many standard or required courses completed as part of study away have been pre-approved to fulfil CC requirements. *[Courses will be coded in Datatel and a comprehensive list provided via the Common Curriculum and International Programs websites. See below.]*
  - b) Other courses completed during study away not pre-approved may count toward CC requirements contingent upon review and **approval by the Director of General Education with the Gen Ed Board and/or appropriate department.** Such courses must meet the standards, content requirements, and learning outcomes for the Common Curriculum and/or the relevant department. A complete course syllabus and supporting materials such as assignments must be submitted with the request: no reviews or approvals will be made without such materials. Submission of materials and review do not guarantee approval. *[Once a course is approved for CC credit, the approval will be recorded permanently with the Registrar.]*

- Full course credit (1.0) mini-terms are typically approved for one LCC credit. No mini-term (whether or not it has pre-departure and/or post-travel program-related activities) may be used to complete the entirety of the two-course LCC requirement. Faculty may submit mini-terms for additional CC designations (such as HUM, SOCS) beginning in 2018. *[Courses will be coded in Datatel and a comprehensive list provided via the Common Curriculum and International Programs websites. See below.]*
- No mini-term or course completed during a full-term study away program can count for more than one CC requirement (LCC and SOCS, for example). In cases where a mini-term or course has been approved as capable of fulfilling more than one CC requirement, students must choose which ONE requirement to apply it toward. *[This restates the existing policy on double-counting concerning all CC requirements, including mini-terms and study away programs.]*
- No mini-term or course completed during a full-term study away program can be used to fulfil the FPR/FPR-H, SRS/SCH-150, or (except in strictly limited and defined circumstances) WAC requirements. These courses have unique pedagogical requirements and learning outcomes designed for the Common Curriculum and Union College's academic program. *[This is restates the existing policy with respect to these particular courses.]*

The revised guidelines will require some modification of the information on the completion of the Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement, as follows. Tracks A and B correspond to the language and coursework pathways approved by the General Faculty in 2005. Track C integrates both tracks A and B in special situations (see below). Please note that the revised guidelines above have the effect of automatically including study away coursework in the three tracks.

### **COMPLETING THE LANGUAGES AND CULTURE (LCC) REQUIREMENT**

Complete the two-course LCC requirement by one of these tracks:

- A. Take a ***sequence of TWO language courses*** beginning at 101 or higher. **PLEASE NOTE:** Because of the numbering systems in Latin and Greek, you must complete LAT 102 and LAT 103 or GRK 102 and GRK 103; LAT 101 and GRK 101 do not count for LCC language sequence credit.
- B. Take ***any TWO non-language LCC courses***. **PLEASE NOTE:** Mini-terms that have been approved for LCC credit can fulfill one (only) of the two courses under this track, with or without pre-departure and post-travel program-related activities.
- C. Take ***a language course*** and ***a connected non-language LCC course*** as part of ***a full-term study away program***. The language course cannot be an Anglophone language or in a language or cultural tradition/society taught as part of Union College's curricula. Both courses must be completed in a culturally immersive setting as part of the same study away program. **PLEASE NOTE:** a Language course and a non-language LCC course cannot be combined to fulfil the LCC requirement in any other circumstance.

**RATIONALE.** The Gen Ed Board oversees the general education program and formulates plans and policies relating to it. The Director of General Education serves as Chair of the Gen Ed Board and is responsible for the administration of the program. In discharging these responsibilities under the governance system, the Gen Ed Board aimed to respect and balance two equally important objectives in its review and revision of guidelines related to study away and the completion of CC requirements. First, that International Programs should continue in the first instance to create, develop, and administer study away programs to meet Union's broader mission and the intrinsic goals of study away. More simply put, study away has its own rationale and purposes for the college and its students; it should not be made to serve the Common Curriculum or a specific CC requirement without an explicit charge to that effect from the AAC. Second, that any coursework completed by students at Union College or elsewhere and used to fulfil Common Curriculum requirements meet the standards, content requirements, and learning outcomes for the program. Such coursework should respect the general education program approved by the General Faculty in 2005.

Union's study away programs are anything but uniform – quite rightly, in many instances – and are likely to become more diverse and heterogeneous as the college's mission and place in the world evolve, and the world evolves around it. We believe it is essential that International Programs have the freedom and flexibility to operate and thrive in that context. The practice of giving blanket credit for completion of the LCC requirement is a one-size-fits-all approach that was not approved by the General Faculty in 2005, would not now be considered best practice, and is not sensitive to the diversity of Union's study way programs.

The blanket credit practice broke the link between course-based academic credit for LCC approved by the General Faculty in 2005. The creators of our general education program clearly recognized the problems with such a blanket approach and they acted on that understanding in composing and explaining the LCC requirement. They expected that, in most instances, students would complete coursework during study away that fulfilled the requirements for LCC. In most instances, that's exactly what does happen and the revised guidelines do not change that. Where a program did not allow students to complete courses 'dealing with the culture and society of their host country', the coursework could be applied to other CC requirements; there are current programs that fit this model as well. At no time did the reform subcommittee consider the act of study away equivalent to academic credit for two LCC courses or sufficient for completing the requirement. Nonetheless, in certain instances, that is precisely what is happening vis a vis completing the LCC requirement. Finally, in adding study away to the LCC pathways, the subcommittee did not require International Programs to modify its programs or reorient its own unique mission.

Overall, then, the relationship between LCC and study away has deviated significantly from what the General Faculty approved in 2005. In sufficient instances it deviates in ways that short-change our students' education in linguistic or cultural understanding and undermine the integrity of the Common Curriculum. Incorporating LCC within the existing policy for completing other CC requirements restores the original program specifications and is the most practical way to balance and respect the key objectives above. The practical effects of the revised guidelines are minimal. They will not make it harder for Union students to participate in study away: they will make it harder for students to miss out on or avoid the depth and rigour of cultural learning

that the General Faculty voted for in 2005. Therefore, far from being detrimental to Union's academic programs, these revised guidelines will positively improve academic programs and better enable Union students to become the engaged, ethical contributors in a complex global society described in our mission statement.

**EXPLANATION and RECOMMENDATIONS.** There are few instances in which it will become more complicated for students to complete the LCC requirements as part of participation in study away. For example, a number of programs have a prerequisite structure that means students need only complete one additional LCC course during study away to fulfil the requirement. We nonetheless recognize that some students in tightly structured programs may occasionally face unique complications specific to LCC under the revised guidelines. We have addressed those particular LCC situations in the overview (tables 1 and 2) and recommendations that follow. Let us again reiterate that for *2017-2018, all full-term study away programs will continue to carry blanket approval and no student accepted for those programs will be adversely affected by the revised guidelines.*

**Specific Programs.** We have assessed the specific programs individually as follows:

- **Belgium:** this program builds experience in the major (depth), specifically in Economics. Students are required to complete four courses in Business Administration or Economic Policy. Students may submit suitable courses for LCC approval under the standard policy, but it is unclear how many, in practice, will meet those content requirements and learning outcomes. However, the revised guidelines should encourage students to seek out coursework with broader cultural implications that leverages their location, perhaps in lieu of more technical coursework that might be as readily completed at Union College.
- **Czech Republic:** this program builds experience in the major (depth), specifically in Engineering. Students on this program have the opportunity to fulfil the LCC requirement under track C above, but are not currently required to complete the courses that would allow them to do so. Specifically, students in Prague can complete track C by completing the available introductory Czech language course and Czech culture course. Our information indicates quite a number of students complete the latter while few if any complete the former. Based on input from our Division 4 faculty representative, strongly encouraging or requiring students to complete both courses would not interfere with the completion of Engineering coursework. We strongly recommend that these two courses be made mandatory. Students who do not complete the LCC requirement by track C in this way, would still be able to transfer the Czech culture course as an LCC course. Because of this program's particular relevance for Engineering students, whose program of study is especially structured and hierarchical, the Director of General Education and Gen Ed Board will work with International Programs and Engineering on the appropriate transition.
- **England-York:** this is a broad based curriculum (breadth) program. The Union faculty director teaches one course and students complete other courses at York – St. Johns University. The Brexit vote of 2016 and the official notification by the United Kingdoms of its intention to leave the European Union have initiated the most profound thinking about and practical challenges to the national identities and political union of the peoples and nations of Britain and Northern Ireland (and the Republic of Ireland) in a century. Faculty who apply and are accepted to lead this program should be strongly encouraged to submit courses (and associated experiential learning activities) that tackle these questions from diverse disciplinary viewpoints and over their historical trajectory. In this context every Union faculty directors' course should aim for approval as an LCC course. Further, students should be

strongly advised and encouraged to complete coursework that complements it and likewise engages this profound moment in the history of the peoples of Britain and Ireland. There is every scope for students to complete two LCC courses in a dynamic, topical context not found under a blanket approval policy.

- **England-London:** this is a broad based curriculum (breadth) program. Students complete four specified courses. All of these courses are appropriate SOCS courses; of them *Analyzing and Exploring the Global City: Modernity, Empire, and Modernization* is an appropriate LCC course and has been pre-approved by the Gen Ed Board as such under the revised guidelines. London too is at the center of the challenges noted above; it is the most culturally complex city in Britain and voted overwhelmingly to remain within the European Union. Students should be strongly advised and encouraged to complete appropriate coursework in Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences at Union College that prepare them to understand the cultural complexity of London, the history and contemporary realities of Britain as a multi-ethnic society, and similar questions. It might be worth considering as well changing one of the existing required courses to better take advantage of the location and opportunity to engage this profound moment in the history of the peoples of Britain and Europe.
- **France-Lille:** this program builds experience in the major (depth), specifically in Economics. Students are required to complete up to six courses from the IESEG School of Management. Students may submit suitable courses for LCC approval under the standard policy, but it is unclear how many, in practice, will meet those content requirements and learning outcomes. However, the revised guidelines should encourage students to seek out coursework with broader cultural implications that leverages their location, perhaps in lieu of more technical coursework that might be as readily completed at Union College.
- **Ireland-Galway:** this is a broad based curriculum (breadth) program. The program is run under the auspices of the Partnership for Global Education with Hobart-William Smith. Faculty directors alternate between Union and HWS and teach one course. Students complete a second required course, *GAL 210 Contemporary Irish Culture and Society*, which has been pre-approved by the Gen Ed Board to fulfil the LCC, HUM, or SOCS requirements. Faculty directors are expected to offer a course relevant to Ireland, Irish Studies, and/or the locale. In practice, the directors' courses (in the eight year window reviewed by the Gen Ed Board) would typically be approved for LCC credit. Further, anecdotal information suggests that most students complete at least one other course at NUI-Galway that would be appropriate to fulfil LCC. In other words, the existing possibilities for completing LCC and other CC requirements are in practice already built into this program. Indeed, in our view the program at NUI-Galway is an ideal vehicle for an LCC-centric study away experience and this is the one instance in which the Gen Ed Board strongly encourages International Programs and its partners with PGE to make this an explicit goal by ensuring that every faculty directors' course meets the guidelines for LCC, whether taught by Union or HWS faculty. Should Union adopt a foreign language requirement, NUI-Galway is perfectly positioned to offer Union students something unique: intensive language study in Gaelic/Irish as well as literature and culture.
- **Italy-Sicily:** This program builds experience in the major (depth), specifically in Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. It also includes intensive language learning in Italian and a TAB

course on the *History and Culture of Sicily*. It is anomalous under tracks A, B, and C. As it involves a language available for study at Union College, the Italian language course cannot be combined with the History and Culture of Sicily to fulfil the LCC requirement under track C. It is unlikely that other coursework could be submitted by students and approved for LCC credit under the standard policy. Students who completed this study away program as currently configured can contribute one course to either LCC track A or track B, requiring the completion of the second LCC course under either track at Union College. We do not see this as unduly burdensome, but the Gen Ed Board would be willing to qualify this program for track C on a single-case basis; we would prefer to do so as a temporary measure.

- **Turkey:** this program is on hiatus because of the current political situation and the Gen Ed Board will take up the specifics of this program when its status changes.

***General Comments and Recommendations.*** We have seen a significant increase in the number of students seeking to apply courses completed during study away to Common Curriculum requirements; this is part of a general increase in applications to use transfer, AP, and IB courses for the same purpose. Advising for study away students needs to catch up to this new reality. In particular, the open menu or ‘breadth’ approach of some programs works against one of the most powerful rationale for and benefits of study away: to intentionally use the unique and different academic and/or cultural setting of study away to enhance and multiply the effects of academic coursework. More simply put, students should be encouraged, advised, even required to a) directly link academic coursework in study away to the locale and cultural learning and b) engage academic coursework and learning not available at Union College. We should actively encourage students to treat study away as an opportunity to expand the global content and inflection of their coursework and education. Overall, there is a lack of deliberateness on the part of students seeking to fulfil CC requirements with study away; the blanket approval policy for LCC is particularly detrimental to that end by requiring no thought or deliberateness about coursework. This is one of the most important considerations by the Gen Ed Board in restoring the original program specification through the revised guidelines; it is surely what the program approved by the General Faculty in 2005 intended. It is incumbent upon International Programs and regular faculty advisers to see that students develop those unique learning connections and opportunities, however interested they may be in ‘checking boxes’ in general education with study away coursework.

The Gen Ed Board integrated tracks A and B via track C to address peculiarities associated with using study away coursework from certain programs to complete LCC. The programs that contain courses approved for completion of LCC under track C are Cambodia, Czech Republic, India, and Kenya. First, we agreed on the intellectual benefits and cultural learning of combining formal language learning with dedicated coursework in cultural analysis in these particular locales. The reform subcommittee foresaw this in its emphasis on language learning and cultural diversity/complexity in the LCC requirement. Second, the particular instances where this occurs in study away involve languages and cultures not offered or studied at Union College. These opportunities neither compete with existing academic programs and course offerings at Union nor are available to our students outside these unique programs and situations. That said, we strongly advise International Programs to work with faculty and partners abroad to strengthen the level of language instruction and the interconnectedness of the courses involved. The Gen Ed

Board will not approve the use of study away coursework in any other program in this way if either the language or specific cultural tradition/society is taught as part of the academic programs and curriculum at Union College.

Beginning with mini-terms offered in Summer 2018, the Gen Ed Board will permanently discontinue the policy of permitting a mini-term associated with pre-departure and/or post-return 'coursework' to fulfil the entirety of the two-course LCC requirement. Mini-terms were not included in the program approved by the General Faculty in 2005. The current guidelines were adopted on an ad hoc basis through administrative processes and without robust guidelines governing implementation. We have found scant evidence in the review of existing mini-terms that such ad hoc 'coursework' constitutes the equivalent of 1.0 academic course. We note that the 2010 survey about mini-terms never considered offering academic course credit to this ad hoc 'coursework', just 'distribution credits'. This Gen Ed Board is no more persuaded that a three-week mini-term with such associated 'coursework' constitutes the equivalent of 2.0 academic credits. We are also unconvinced that mini-terms with ad hoc coursework are comparable to a full-term study away program or able to achieve fully the cultural learning specified in the LCC content requirements and learning outcomes during its short duration. We strongly encourage International Programs and faculty to develop robust linkages between mini-terms and courses approved for academic credit on a permanent basis via the normal course approval process through the AAC and Gen Ed Board. Finally, as the final step in its two-year review of Common Curriculum designations, the Gen Ed Board will review CC designations assigned to mini-terms in Fall 2017; in keeping with past practice, the Gen Ed Board will request resubmission of individual mini-terms for LCC and/or other CC designations if needed; we anticipate making a very small number of requests for resubmission, if any.

**Table 1. FULL TERM STUDY AWAY PROGRAMS and CC DESIGNATIONS**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LCC TRACK</b>	<b>COURSES and CC DESIGNATIONS</b>
Argentina	A/B	SPN 204T Intermediate Spanish Abroad, <b>LCCS, HUM</b> SPN 205T Advanced Spanish Abroad, <b>LCCS, HUM</b> TAB 228T Argentine History, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> TAB 212T Argentine Culture, <b>LCC, SOCS</b>
China (Shanghai)	A	CHN 204T, <b>LCCC, HUM</b> CHN 205T, <b>LCCC, HUM</b>
France (Rennes)	A	FRN 204T, <b>LCCF, HUM</b> FRN 207T, <b>LCCF, HUM</b> FRN 208T Contemporary France, <b>LCCF, HUM, SOCS</b> FRN 306T Readings in French and Francophone Culture, <b>LCCF, HUL, HUM</b>
Germany (Berlin/Freiburg) – Track 1	A	GER 100, <b>HUM</b> GER 101, <b>LCCG, HUM</b> GER 238T German Civilization, <b>LCCG, HUM</b>
Germany (Berlin/Freiburg) – Track 2	A	GER 102 or above, <b>LCCG, HUM</b> GER 201 or above, <b>LCCG, HUM</b> GER 300T German Civilization, <b>LCCG, HUM</b>
Italy (Florence)	A	ITL 104T Italian Studied Abroad, <b>LCCI, HUM</b> ITL 116T Italian Renaissance Architecture, <b>LCCI, HUM</b>
Japan (Osaka)	A	JPN 204T, 252T, 350T, or 450T, Japanese Abroad <b>LCCJ, HUM</b> JPN 251T, 253T, 351T, 451T Written Japanese, <b>LCCJ, HUM</b>
Spain (Seville)	A	SPN 204T Spanish Language Abroad, <b>LCCS, HUM</b> SPN 208T Spanish Civilization, <b>LCCS, HUM</b> SPN 300T Special Topics in Spanish Literature, <b>LCCS, HUM, HUL</b>
Australia (PGE)	B	TAB 350T History and Culture of Australia, <b>LCC, SOCS, HUM</b> ENS 300T, <b>LCC, SET</b> BIO 350T, <b>SET</b> BIO 352T, <b>SET</b>
Brazil (PGE)	B	POR 104T Portuguese Abroad, <b>LCCP, HUM</b> SOC 323T Survey of Brazilian Society, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> MLT 286T Contemporary Brazilian Cinema, <b>LCC, HUM</b>
Fiji	B	ANT 285T Peoples of the Pacific, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> ANT 226T Culture and Education, <b>LCC, SOCS</b>

Greece (CYA)	B	XXLT Modern Greek Culture and Language, <b>LCC, HUM</b> Second required course in Greek History, Religion, Mythology, Art, Archaeology, <b>LCC, HUM, HUL, SOCS</b>
Russia (Siberia)	B	RUS 101 and above, <b>LCCR, HUM</b> REE 300T History and Environment of Siberia, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> MLT 300T Siberia Internship, <b>LCC</b>
National Health Systems	B	TAB 323T National Health Services, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> TAB 324T Historical and Cultural Factors, <b>LCC, SOCS</b>
Cambodia	C	PSC 201T Crossing Cultures: Cambodia Study Abroad, <b>SOCS, LCC</b> TAB 105T Introduction to Cambodian/Khmer, <b>LCC</b> IDM 491T Internship with a Mission
Czech Republic	C	TAB 104T Czech Language Abroad, <b>HUM</b> TAB 320T Czech Culture Course, <b>LCC, HUM</b>
India	C	Hindi 100 <b>HUM</b> ANT 255T Culture and Work, <b>LCC, SOCS</b>
Kenya (NY6)	C	SWAH 101, 102, 103, <b>HUM</b> ANT 241 Culture, Environment, and Development in East Africa, <b>LCC, SOCS</b>
Belgium	OTHER	See also comments above.
England (York)	OTHER	See comments above.
England (London)	OTHER	TAB 302T International Marketing, <b>SOCS</b> TAB 365T Western European Government and Politics, <b>SOCS</b> PSY 240T Child Development in a British Context, <b>SOCS</b> TAB 360T The Global City: London, <b>LCC, SOCS</b> See also comments above.
France (Lille)	OTHER	See comments above.
Ireland (PGE)	OTHER	GAL 210 Contemporary Irish Culture and Society, <b>LCC, HUM, SOCS</b> See also comments above.
Italy (Sicily)	OTHER	ITL 104T Italian Studied Abroad, <b>LCCI, HUM</b> TAB 329T History and Culture of Sicily, <b>LCC, HUM, SOCS</b> See also comments above.
Turkey	OTHER	Hiatus

**Table 2. STUDY AWAY MINI-TERMS and CC DESIGNATIONS**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Current CC DESIGNATIONS*</b>
HST 278T	Public History of South Africa	<i>LCC, SOCS</i>
MLT 341T (2 LCC)	Summer Mini-Term in Senegal	<i>LCC, HUM</i>
REE 341T	Holocaust Mini-Term	<i>LCC</i>
SOC 378T (2 LCC)	Community Service Mini-Term	<i>LCC, SOCS</i>
TAB 273T	Coffee and Ethiopia	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 275T	Mini-Term Study in Cuba	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 321T	Argentina	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 330T	China	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 332T	France (Dawn to Print)	<i>LCC, HUM</i>
TAB 333T (2 LCC)	New Zealand Mini-Term	<i>LCC, SET</i>
TAB 336T	France (Three Weeks in Louvre)	<i>LCC, HUM</i>
TAB 339T	India	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 341T	London Theatre Mini-Term	<i>LCC, HUM</i>
TAB 342T	Cordoba (Spain): Religion and Technologies	<i>LCC, HUM</i>
TAB 344T (2 LCC)	Ancient and Modern Egypt	<i>LCC</i>
TAB 348T	Mexican-American Border Mini-Term	<i>LCC</i>
WMC 354T	Balinese Performing Arts	<i>LCC, HUM</i>

2 LLC = currently counts for two LCC 'distribution' credits, not two academic credits.

# UNION

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## COLLEGE

To the Director of General Education,

November 13, 2018

At the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, the General Education Board sent the AAC revised guidelines governing the completion of Common Curriculum requirements through study away. These are due to take effect in 2018, but since advising for the 2018-2019 academic year will start at the beginning of the winter 2018 term, the AAC recognizes that it needs to respond before the end of the fall 2017 term.

In the guidelines, the General Education Board writes that:

“Our existing guidelines directly and substantively deviate from the program approved by the General Faculty. The disjunction occurred through administrative processes with indeterminate involvement by the General Education Board; I am unable to find reference to the AAC and a vote of the General Faculty that approved the policy/program changes in the existing guidelines.”

Specifically, the General Education Board argues that:

“In 2007, the Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies (with responsibility for general education) and the Gen Ed Board considered a request to eliminate the tie between academic course credit and completion of the LCC requirement. The request proposed that students complete LCC by a variety of additional options (similar to practices under the previous general education program with respect to ‘Other cultures’). These included terms abroad and mini-terms. By Spring 2008, the Registrar’s materials for Fall 2008 registration included the following for completion of LCC: ‘Any full term abroad will satisfy both LCC requirement[s]. A mini-term satisfies both LCC requirements only if it is associated with an on-campus pre- and/or post-term seminar.’ By Fall 2008, then, the connection between course-based academic credit for LCC approved by the General Faculty had been severed. This change to the program requirements occurred through administrative processes involving various deans, International Programs, the Registrar, assorted faculty members, and (indeterminately) the Gen Ed Board. To date, we can find no reference to the AAC (in its minutes) and a vote of the General Faculty that approved the policy/program changes in the current guidelines. Put simply, despite a vote to the contrary by the General Faculty in 2005, the college returned to a model of blanket approval for LCC and study away.”

Since these are serious assertions, the AAC examined the text approved by the General Faculty during the spring of 2005 by mail ballot for the current General Education Program: “General

Education at Union for the 21st Century.” We found only a few references to LCC courses. Here we have highlighted the relevant text:

(1) [Page 2]

**“3. 2 course in Linguistic and Cultural Competency. This category includes courses in any discipline covering:**

- **Term Abroad courses that deal with a cultural tradition outside the US**
- cross-cultural comparison and theories about cultural complexity
- one or more cultural traditions outside of the US
- one or more “minority” cultural tradition within the United States
- a sequence of 2 courses in a foreign language at level 12 or higher.”

(2) [Page 6]

**“c) 2 course[s] in Linguistic and Cultural Competency:**

- Courses in cross-cultural comparison, in international relations, and in theoretical understandings of cultural and social complexity
- **Term Abroad courses are an option here if these courses deal with cultural traditions outside the US. Other term abroad courses can count toward other general education requirements.**
- The requirement is reduced to two courses because students can now take courses in cultural complexity in Part A, B and C. **This requirement serves the function of making sure that students who take no such courses in other sections take at least one course prompting them to consider social and cultural diversity.**
- moves away from the “West” “non-West” formulation in order to prompt reflection on diversity within US society, the interconnected nature of our world community, and complexity/diversity within any cultural tradition.

Here we have put the phrase “at least one course” in bold. Perhaps most important, we found a reference that suggests that students could receive LCC credit for one course merely by being on a term abroad.

(3) [Page 14]

**“Sample Worksheets:**

**Gen Ed Worksheet (sample for Mechanical Engineering major, taken from the transcript of a junior who has yet to do his literature or his science elective)**

First-Year Preceptorial \_\_\_\_\_

Sophomore Seminar \_\_\_\_\_

Social Science 1.  
Sociology 10

## Humanities

1. English 34B, Nature and Environmental Writing
2. English 22

## Cultural Competency:

1. Czech Culture
2. Prague Term Abroad

## Natural Science, Quantitative Reasoning etc.

1. Science with Lab                      Chemistry 10
2. Quantitative Reasoning              Math 13
3. Third course:                              Physics 17

## ID Cluster: STMC

1. History of Technology (on Prague term)
2. English 34 B, Nature and Environmental Writing
3. Env. Studies 10 (also serves as Science elective for ME major)."

Thus after reviewing the text approved by the AAC and General Faculty, we have found evidence that while the 2005 Common Curriculum tied the LCC requirement to course credit in a way that was a change from the previous requirements, the new requirements passed in 2005 allowed for study abroad in itself to count as the equivalent of one LCC course. The first two highlighted passages provide evidence that LCC credit was intended to be tied to courses. The third highlighted passage indicates that it may have intended to tie LCC credit to a minimum of one course, and the fourth highlighted example (taken from an example of an ME student who had already completed a term abroad, presumably under the older Gen Ed model) appears to grant one LCC credit merely for being on a term abroad.

In the preface to the proposed guidelines, the General Education Board mentions a "request to eliminate the tie between academic course credit and completion of the LCC requirement," and refer to a memo from Tom Jewell to the General Education Board, which although undated, appears to have been sent in the spring of 2007. In this Jewell writes:

"The Linguistic and Cultural Competency requirement as published is tied to academic credit. The engineering programs would like to request that the L&CC requirements for engineering be modified to be parallel with what has been the practice in the past."

The rest of his memo makes clear that by "tied to academic credit," he is referring to "Two (2) courses in Linguistic and Cultural Competency," by "the practice in the past" he means "Terms abroad or exchanges. (3 courses)." So it does appear that Jewell was under the impression that the new approved Common Curriculum program would not grant LCC credit merely for being on a term abroad.

In order to try and clarify this matter, the AAC contacted the Registrar, Penny Adey, the chair of the General Education Board in 2007-2008, Doug Klein, and the relevant Dean at the time,

Kimmo Rosenthal. Among the minutes of the 2007-2008 General Education Board, we found this text from the meeting of January 10, 2008:

“We decided the following ...

2) Linguistic and Cultural Competency requirement (LCC) can be filled in the following ways:

- term aboard courses that deal with a cultural tradition outside the US\*
- a sequence of two courses in one foreign language at level 101 or higher
- two courses designated LCC\*\*

\* Participation in any *full* term abroad waives one LCC course requirement regardless of courses taken

\*\* types of content that qualify for LCC designation:

- cross-cultural comparison and theories about cultural complexity
- one or more cultural traditions outside of the US
- one or more cultural traditions in the United States from historically underrepresented populations.”

Doug Klein has told the AAC that:

“Yes, I definitely recall the discussion with Kimmo in which the Board decided that the mere fact of going abroad was worth one LCC credit, regardless of the courses taken. To get the second LCC for going abroad, there had to be a culture or language course. As I recall, nearly all full terms abroad did include such a course...”

When one reads the text approved by the General Faculty, one is struck by how general it is. Similarly, when one reads the minutes of the General Education Board from 2007-2008, it is clear that the General Education Board at the time had to interpret many aspects of how the new General Education Program would work in practice. It now appears that aspects of the current implementation are being reinterpreted, based on the recent review conducted by the Gen Ed Board.

The preface also refers to the Spring 2008 Registration Instructions, which were the first time that the new General Education guidelines were published by the Registrar. These include the following:

**“Linguistic and Cultural Competency (2)**

- Any sequence of two courses in one foreign language at level 101 or higher will satisfy the LCC requirement.
- Any course previously assigned CDAA, CDEA or CDLA, or any course carrying the new LCC designation will count toward the LCC requirement. - Any full term abroad will satisfy both LCC requirement[s]. A miniterm satisfies both LCC requirements only if it is associated with an on-campus pre- and/or post-term seminar.”

The current Common Curriculum Advising Worksheet and Policies has slightly different text:

*Explain the different ways of satisfying the Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirement.*

A student can do any **ONE** of these things...

- Go on a term abroad that deals with a cultural tradition outside of the US. This satisfies both courses of the LCC requirement...

These texts appear to flow from the earlier interpretation by the Gen Ed Board of how the policy should be implemented. The text approved by the General Faculty suggests that the courses taken abroad should “deal with cultural traditions outside the US” and that at least one of the courses should prompt “them to consider social and cultural diversity.” This is more specific than the current Common Curriculum Advising Worksheet and Policies, but is also less restrictive than the revised guidelines the General Education Board has proposed.

With regard to the difference between what the General Education Board approved and the Registrar implemented in 2008, Kimmo Rosenthal had these thoughts:

“We're going back a decade so the following is speculation. Anything that the Gen Ed Board passes is not the final word and there is always give-and-take with the AAC. My guess is that is what happened - the AAC recommended changes (there may not have been a formal motion, rather communication back to Gen Ed) and the Gen Ed Board agreed (notice the emendations regarding CDEA etc.) sending a different version over to the Registrar.”

Doug Klein noted:

“I saw Kimmo's reply. I, too, do not have a perfect memory of this. My guess, to go along with Kimmo's, is that some one/group (Gen Ed Board? AAC? International Programs?) reviewed all terms abroad available at the time of the decision and determined that they all had at least one course that students took (by choice or requirement) that satisfied LCC criteria, so to simplify life the final wording was printed. I am sorry that I do not know how that final declaration was made.”

Finally, Penny Adey added:

“Yes, I agree with Kimmo. We would have gotten this wording from someone outside our office and if there was an issue, it would have been brought to our attention back then. This was always my recollection, that a full term abroad waived [Here she probably meant “fulfilled”] the LCC requirement.”

The proposed revised guidelines also beg a question. If the implementation of the LCC requirement publicized in the spring of 2008 directly and substantively deviated from the program approved by the General Faculty, then why did faculty members at that time (including several members of the General Education Board from 2016-2017), when the program they had approved was still relatively fresh in their minds, not protest?

The AAC is very reluctant to reject a proposal from the General Education Board. Indeed the text approved by the AAC and General Faculty for the current General Education Program explicitly says that:

“The AAC shall form two standing sub-councils: a Sub-council on the Standing of Students and the General Education Board. Unless the recommendations of these standing sub-councils are deemed by the AAC to be in conflict with the objectives of the College's academic policy, they will normally be sustained by that Council and forwarded to the General Faculty and the Dean of the Faculty.”

We have provided documentation and raised considerations that may cast doubt on the Gen Ed Board's interpretation of the 2005 Gen Ed document approved by the General Faculty and its assumptions about how administrators and the Gen Ed Board of 2007-2008 interpreted and implemented them. None of this detracts from the content of the proposal, which some faculty may well see as an improvement on our current practice.

We therefore invite the General Education Board to reconsider the justification of the proposal to revise the current guidelines used to grant LCC credit for study away and resubmit it to the AAC. Perhaps it would also be useful to discuss the proposed revisions with the different divisions of the College. Since the AAC would like more time to consider such a proposal, and we recognize that, in practice, these guidelines are implemented at the start of the winter term preceding the academic year when students study away, we would like to ask the Gen Ed Board to send us such a proposal by the start of the spring term. Depending on the content of the proposal, the AAC may decide to bring it to the faculty for a vote.

Since the AAC has returned this proposal, it also directs the General Education Board and Office of International Programs not to implement the revised guidelines for study away during the 2018-2019 academic year, and instead to retain the current guidelines. We also see that the new language has already been incorporated via a link into the online Academic Catalog:

<https://catalog.union.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=532>

[https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/\\_documents/genedadvising16a.pdf](https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/_documents/genedadvising16a.pdf)

Please arrange for the removal of the proposed revised text and its replacement with the existing guidelines. All changes to the Common Curriculum requirements and guidelines in the Academic Catalog, or linked to it, should be approved in advance by the AAC.

Sincerely,



Mark Walker  
Chair on behalf of the Academic Affairs Council