

## Section 8 - General Education Requirement (GER)

### Review of New and Existing GER Courses

When an action involves a change in General Education Requirements (GER), the UAB will refer the action, preferably with recommendations, to the GER Review Committee.

When an action involves a change in the GER, the initiator must communicate with all effected Faculty in school/colleges, community campuses (including Prince William Sound Community College), Deans, and their assistants.

All GER courses must have instructional goals and assessable student outcomes that are consistent with the current UAA catalog GER category descriptors and the appropriate GER Student Outcomes (see pages - - ).

All GER courses are subject to ongoing review and approval through the normal Governance process on a cycle, proposed by the Departments and approved by the colleges, which must not exceed ten years.

The General Education Review Committee (GERC) is a standing committee of the Undergraduate Academic Board (UAB) reporting to the Undergraduate Academic Board.

The GERC Review Process is as follows:

- 1) Department/School/College prepare proposal and coordinate
- 2) UAB Agenda (1<sup>st</sup> reading)
- 3) GER Committee of UAB
- 4) UAB Agenda (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)
- 5) Faculty Senate (approved actions of UAB only)
- 6) Administration (approved actions of the UAA Faculty Senate only)

The Committee shall: (with respect to course actions and reviews)

- 1) apply the current UAA catalog's GER category descriptors and GER Student Outcomes as primary criteria for evaluating all GER courses with regard to their appropriateness as courses in the General Education curriculum. Tier 3: Integrative Capstone courses have additional criteria (see <http://governance2.uaa.alaska.edu/ger/tier3.model.pdf>);
- 2) review all requests to add to, delete from, or substantively modify the courses in the General Education curriculum;
- 3) recommend course actions to the Board based on the criteria;
- 4) facilitate the overall review and processing of General Education course actions by working with initiators and departments;
  - 4b. expedite the review of course action requests currently on hold (with respect to policy)
- 5) review all requests to modify General Education Requirements or policies;
- 6) recommend actions to the Board based on the review; (other)
- 7) undertake such additional tasks or responsibilities relating to GERs as assigned by the Board.

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## Deletion of a GER Course

UAA policy states that a course may not remain on the GER list if it has not been offered successfully at least once during the past four semesters, excluding Summer Sessions. The list of GER courses will be provided to UAB by the Office of Academic Affairs each spring. Review of the GER list will be done annually by UAB in the spring semester.

## Membership

Pursuant to the December 2002 Faculty Senate Resolution #1, the membership of the GERC shall consist of:

- Five (5) to seven (7) members of UAB, no two of whom represent the same College or the extended campuses. One must be an extended campuses' UAB member.
- At least one faculty member from a discipline represented in each of the General Education Categories: Written Communications, Oral Communications, Quantitative Skills, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts. Members from these categories will be added if and only if they are not represented among the UAB members selected above.
- At least one faculty representative from each of the UAA colleges: CAS, CBPP, CHSW, Engineering, COE, CTC. Members from these colleges and schools will be added if and only if they are not represented among the UAB members or General Education Category members selected above.
- A student representative.

All membership terms are for two academic years.

The UAB\_GERC members will be elected by UAB members at a meeting prior to the first Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year. The Category discipline representatives, as needed, will be selected by the Faculty Senate Executive Board after a call for nominations is made at the first Faculty Senate meeting. The College representatives, as needed, will be chosen internally at the College(s) otherwise lacking membership. The UAB Chair will notify the college(s) promptly after the Faculty Senate Executive Board selections are made, if they must supply a member to GERC.

A quorum is constituted by a majority of UAB members of the GERC. All other regulations of UAB apply to the General Education Review Committee.

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## GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (GER) FOR BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

### PREAMBLE

The GER provides students with a common educational experience in order to (1) provide a foundation for further study and (2) broaden the educational experience of every degree-seeking student. It is designed to promote an elevation of the student's level in basic college-level skills (Tier 1), a breadth of exposure to traditional academic disciplines (Tier 2), and experience in applying his/her education in understanding and responding to the evolving state of knowledge and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Tier 3).

### Tier 1: Basic College-Level Skills 12 credits

The UAA GER begins with Basic College-Level Skills enhancement in written communication, oral communication, and quantitative skills:

- Courses in Written Communication and Oral Communication develop the critical reading, thinking, and communication skills (writing, speaking, and listening) necessary for personal and professional success.
- Courses in Quantitative Skills foster the analytical and mathematical abilities necessary for success in undergraduate study and professional life. Baccalaureate students are required to complete the 12 credits of Basic College-Level Skills (Oral, Written, and Quantitative) before completing 60 total degree applicable credits. Students may select approved Basic College-Level Skills, which may also fulfill requirements in their intended major. Faculty in English, Communication, and Mathematics provide placement criteria (which may require the completion of preparatory coursework).

### Tier 2: Disciplinary Areas 22 credits

The GER continues with courses in four required disciplinary areas categorized by course content and academic discipline that are designed to guarantee a breadth of academic experience. These are Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Science, and Social Science:

- Courses in the Fine Arts examine the historical, aesthetic, critical, and creative aspects of art.
- Courses in the Humanities consider the cultural, historical, literary, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual traditions shaping the contemporary world.

- Courses in Natural Science present theoretical and descriptive approaches to understanding the natural and physical worlds. Lab courses in the Natural Sciences emphasize gathering data and analyzing hypotheses according to the scientific method.
- Courses in the Social Sciences explore insights about individuals, groups, and cultures derived from empirical methodologies.

*Note: The 37-credit General Education Requirement, including the 3-credit Integrative Capstone, is required for graduation after September 2008 for baccalaureate students who were admitted to major or pre-major status under the 2005-2006 UAA Catalog or later catalogs. (For specifics on catalog year requirements, see chapter 7, Academic Standards and Regulations, Related Undergraduate Admissions Policies).*

### **Tier 3: Integrative Capstone 3 credits**

For Baccalaureate students, the GER experience culminates with an Integrative Capstone, which includes courses from across the university that require students to integrate knowledge of GER basic college-level skills (Tier 1) and/or disciplinary areas (Tier 2) as part of their course design.

Tier 3 (Integrative Capstone) courses may be taken only after the student has completed all Tier 1 (Basic College-Level Skills) requirements.

*GER Advising Note: All students should consult a faculty or academic advisor for appropriate course selections.*

- Baccalaureate students are required to complete 12 credits of Basic College-Level Skills (Oral, Written, and Quantitative) before completing 60 total degree applicable credits.
- Each of the eight General Education Classifications has a list of approved courses (see the General Education Classification List). Only courses from the GER Classification List may be used to satisfy a distribution area requirement.
- Courses used to satisfy distribution area requirements in General Education may also be used to satisfy School/College requirements and/or Degree/Program requirements, but no course may be counted in more than one General Education category.
- Courses ending with numbers \_93 or \_94 cannot satisfy a GER, and UAA courses not on the approved GER Classification List cannot be petitioned to meet a GER.
- *The 37-credit General Education Requirement, including the 3-credit Integrative Capstone, is required for graduation after September 2008 for baccalaureate students who were admitted to major or pre-major status under the 2005-2006 UAA Catalog or later catalogs. (For specifics on catalog year requirements, see chapter 7, Academic Standards and Regulations, Related Undergraduate Admissions Policies).*

## **GER STUDENT OUTCOMES**

After completing the General Education Requirement, UAA students shall be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats.
2. Reason mathematically, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data competently to reach sound conclusions.
3. Relate knowledge to the historical context in which it developed and the human problems it addresses.
4. Interpret different systems of aesthetic representation and understand their historical and cultural contexts.
5. Investigate the complexity of human institutions and behavior to better understand interpersonal, group, and cultural dynamics.
6. Identify ways in which science has advanced the understanding of important natural processes.
7. Locate and use relevant information to make appropriate personal and professional decisions.
8. Adopt critical perspectives for understanding the forces of globalization and diversity; and
9. Integrate knowledge and employ skills gained to synthesize creative thinking, critical judgment, and personal experience in a meaningful and coherent manner.

## GER Category Descriptors

### Tier 1: Basic College-Level Skills

#### **Oral Communication Descriptor:**

Oral Communication skills courses increase the abilities of students to interact appropriately and effectively in a variety of contexts, including interpersonal, small group, and public speaking settings. In these courses, students develop both their message creation and message interpretation skills in order to be more successful communicators. In doing so, students develop an awareness of the role of communication in a variety of human relationships. Students develop and implement effective and appropriate communication skills, including the ability to develop, organize, present, and critically evaluate messages; analyze audiences; and adapt to a variety of in-person communication settings.

#### **Written Communication Descriptor:**

Written communication courses emphasize that writing is a recursive and frequently collaborative process of invention, drafting, and revising as well as a primary element of active learning in literate cultures. Students practice methods for establishing credibility, reasoning critically, and appealing to the emotions and values of their audience. They write for a variety of purposes and audiences by employing methods of rhetorical and cultural analysis. They develop the tools to read, think, and write analytically about print and non-print texts and to generate texts that engage their own perceptions while synthesizing the ideas of texts and scholars. Students demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively by selecting form and content that fits the situation; adhering to genre conventions; adapting their voice, tone, and level of formality to that situation; and controlling stylistic features such as sentence variety, syntax, grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

#### **Quantitative Skills Descriptor:**

Quantitative skills courses increase the mathematical abilities of students in order to make them more adept and competent producers and wiser consumers of the mathematical, statistical and computational analyses which will dominate 21st century decision-making. In these courses, all baccalaureate students develop their algebraic, analytic and numeric skills, use them to solve applied problems, and correctly explain their mathematical reasoning.

### Tier 2: Disciplinary Areas

#### **Fine Arts and General Education Descriptor:**

The Fine Arts (visual and performing arts) focus on the historical, aesthetic, critical, and creative approaches to understanding the context and production of art as academic and creative disciplines as opposed to those that emphasize acquisition of skills. Students who complete the Fine Arts requirement should be able to identify and describe works of art by reference to media employed, historical context and style, and structural principles of design and composition. They should be able to interpret the meaning or intent of works of art and assess their stylistic and cultural importance by reference to their historical significance, their relationship to earlier works and artists and their overall impact of subsequent artistic work.

#### **Humanities Descriptor:**

The humanities examine the characteristic of reality, the purpose of human existence, the properties of knowledge, and the qualities of sound reasoning, eloquent communication, and creative expression. They study the problems of right conduct in personal, social, and political life. They also consider the qualities of the divine, the sacred, and the mysterious. In these tasks the humanities reflect upon the world's heritage of the arts, history, languages, literature, religion, and philosophy. Students who complete a content-oriented course in the humanities should be able to identify texts or objects, to place them in the historical context of the discipline, to articulate the central problems they address, and to provide reasoned assessments of their significance. Students who complete a skills-oriented humanities course in logic should be able to identify the premises and conclusions of brief written arguments, to evaluate their soundness or cogency, and to recognize common fallacies. They should also be able to use a formal technique to determine the validity of simple deductive arguments and to evaluate the adequacy of evidence according to appropriate inductive standards. Students who complete a skill-oriented humanities course in a language should demonstrate proficiency in listening, speaking and writing.

**Natural Sciences Descriptor:**

The natural sciences focus on gaining an understanding of the matter, events and processes that form and sustain our universe. Methods of scientific inquiry are diverse, but all aim to formulate general principles that explain observations and predict future events or behaviors within their disciplines.

Laboratory courses illustrate how scientists develop, test, and challenge scientific theories, providing an appreciation for the process and problems involved in the advancement of scientific knowledge.

Students completing their natural sciences requirement will be able to apply the scientific method by formulating questions or problems, proposing hypothetical answers or solutions, testing those hypotheses, and reaching supportable conclusions. They will also demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of one or more scientific disciplines, a knowledge of the discoveries and advances made within that discipline; as well as, the impact of scientific information in sculpting thought and in providing the foundations for the technology in use at various times in history. Students completing the laboratory class will have demonstrated their ability to work with the tools and in the settings encountered by professionals in the discipline, will carefully observe materials, events or processes and accurately record and analyze their observations.

**Social Sciences Descriptor:**

The social sciences focus on the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of empirical data relevant to the human experience. Disciplines differ in their focus on collective as opposed to individual behavior, biological as opposed to social or cultural factors, the present as opposed to the past, and quantitative as opposed to qualitative data. Students who complete a general education social sciences course should be motivated to reflect on the workings of the society of which they are apart and should possess a broad perspective on the diversity of human behavior. They should be able to distinguish between empirical and non-empirical truth claims. They should be aware of the limits of human objectivity and understand the rudiments of how ideas about social phenomena may be tested and verified or rejected. They should have an introductory knowledge of social science thinking which includes observation, empirical data analysis, theoretical models, quantitative reasoning, and application to social aspects of contemporary life. A student who has met the social science general education requirement is expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge of social science approaches and to apply that knowledge in a particular content area.

**Tier 3: Integrative Capstone****Integrative Capstone:**

The GER experience culminates with the Integrative Capstone, which includes courses from across the university that require students to synthesize across GER domain. Integrative Capstone courses include knowledge integration of GER Basic College-Level Skills (Tier 1) and/or Disciplinary Areas (Tier 2) as part of their course design. Integrative Capstone courses should focus on practice, study, and critical evaluation, and include in their student outcomes an emphasis on the evolving realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Students completing the Integrative Capstone requirement must demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge by accessing, judging and comparing knowledge gained from diverse fields and by critically evaluating their own views in relation to those fields.