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GEN ED AT UHM

This chapter provides an overview of the General Education (Gen Ed) program: features, requirements for students, and text from the foundational document approved by the Board of Regents and Faculty Senate.

In 1999, the faculty reformed UHM's Gen Ed program. Since 2001, students and faculty members have benefited from the program's many positive features.

Flexibility:

Students choose courses that fit their needs and goals.

Enriched curriculum:

Faculty members create new courses or modify existing courses to meet Gen Ed Foundations or Focus Hallmarks.

Attention to social needs:

Students learn about Hawaiian, Asian, & Pacific issues; ethics; and techniques for oral and written communication.

Academic Major as an anchor:

Students make Gen Ed choices that complement the goals and requirements of their Major.

Graduation in 4 years:

Course flexibility, credit for second-language competence, and streamlined requirements make 4-year degrees feasible.

Criteria-based transfer policies:

Transfer courses more readily meet Gen Ed requirements because the decision is based on criteria-governed standards, not course equivalencies.

On-going assessment:

Faculty boards review course proposals to ensure that Gen Ed Hallmarks are met. They also periodically assess student learning outcomes.

Gen Ed Components	
1. <u>Core requirements</u> Foundations Diversification	2. <u>Graduation requirements</u> Focus Hawaiian/Second Language

Gen Ed Requirements: Overview

Sources: *UH Mānoa General Education Requirements; UHM Catalog*

1. Foundations (Core requirement)

Foundations courses give students skills and perspectives that are fundamental to their success in higher education.

Students must complete approved courses in these areas

- Written Communication (FW): 3 credits
- Symbolic Reasoning (FS): 3 credits
- Global & Multicultural Perspectives (FG): 6 credits (2 courses, each from a different group)

2. Diversification (Core requirement)

The Diversification requirement assures that every student is exposed to different domains of knowledge and to multiple methods of inquiry.

Students must complete approved courses in these areas

- Arts (DA), Humanities (DH), & Literatures (DL): 6 credits from different groups
- Biological Science (DB): 3 credits; Physical Science (DP): 3 credits; Science Laboratory (DY): 1 credit
- Social Sciences (DS): 6 credits from different departments

3. Focus (Graduation requirement)

Focus requirements assure that students have knowledge and skills that are necessary for living and working in diverse communities.

Students must complete approved courses in these areas

- Hawaiian, Asian, & Pacific Issues (H): 1 class
- Contemporary Ethical Issues (E): 1 class
- Oral Communication (O): 1 class
- Writing Intensive (W): 5 classes (at least two numbered 300-499)

4. Hawaiian/Second Language (Graduation requirement)

Knowledge of a second language increases a student's ability to understand other people and cultures.

Students must demonstrate competence at the 202 (or equivalent) level in Hawaiian or a second language. (Note: some Schools/Colleges have modified this requirement for their students.) Students with previous language experience may earn up to 16 "back credits."

Gen Ed Requirements

Source: UH Mānoa General Education Requirements, revised September 19, 2007 (Available online; see Appendix, Web Sites.)

Below are the General Education requirements (adopted by the Mānoa Faculty Senate, 12/8/1999 and the Board of Regents, 7/21/2000; changes approved 1/23/2002, 3/21/2007, and 9/19/2007). Modifications to this document require Faculty Senate approval. [*Note: To see exactly what was changed by the Faculty Senate in 9/07, go to www.hawaii.edu/uhmfs/documents/resolutions/20070919_GenEd%20changes-9_11.doc*]

The Gen Ed faculty groups often return to this document to guide their implementation of the Gen Ed program. For example, the Foundations and Focus Hallmarks are based on the descriptions below.

Start of official document (last modified 9/19/2007)

UH Mānoa General Education Requirements

In order to earn a UHM undergraduate degree, a student has to satisfy

1. UH-Mānoa General Education requirements
2. College requirements (e.g., Arts and Sciences General Education requirements)
3. Major requirements

This document concerns the UHM General Education requirements as minimum expectations of educational experience for every University graduate. Colleges and majors build upon this foundation with their own requirements. Thus, this proposal views Undergraduate Education as an opportunity for each student to find coherence through careful combinations of General Education, College, and Major courses. Furthermore, this document notes certain experiences and abilities that can be best attained by particular course work within the major rather via generic courses required of all students.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

General Education requirements are designed to help students acquire knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking that provide a foundation for lifelong learning. The UHM requirements reflect the unique resources of UHM: the depth of its Hawaiian assets and the breadth of its multiculturalism. The general education curriculum gives students a global sense of human diversity while paying special attention to the heritages of Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and Asia.

There are two components to the document. First, General Education requirements are divided into Core requirements and Special UHM Graduate Requirements. Core requirements include Foundation courses and Diversification requirements. Special UHM Graduation Requirements include Focus requirements and Hawaiian or second language.

A. UHM Core Requirements

1. Foundations requirement (12 credits)

Foundation courses are intended to give students skills and perspectives that are fundamental to undertaking higher education. To promote student understanding of connections across fields of inquiry, Foundations courses will ordinarily be linked and require co-registration. Foundations courses may be offered as components of learning communities that also include courses fulfilling major or Diversification requirements. Accommodations will also be made for part-time and transfer students.

However, courses taken to fulfill the Foundations requirement may not be used to fulfill Diversification and Focus requirements.

All full-time UHM students are expected to fulfill foundations requirements before achieving sophomore standing.

a. Written Communication: 3 cr.

Students will be introduced to the rhetorical, conceptual, and stylistic demands of writing at the college level; courses give instruction in composing processes, search strategies, and composing from sources. This course also provides students with experiences in the library and on the Internet and enhances their skills in accessing and various types of primary and secondary materials.

b. Symbolic Reasoning: 3 cr.

Courses fulfilling this requirement will expose students to the beauty and power of formal systems, as well as to their clarity and precision; courses will not focus solely on computational skills. Students should understand the concept of proof as a chain of inferences. They should be able to apply formal rules or algorithms. They should also be able to engage in hypothetical reasoning. In addition, the course should aim to develop the ability of students to use appropriate symbolic techniques in the context of problem solving, and in the presentation and critical evaluation of evidence.

c. Global and Multicultural Perspectives: 2 courses, 6 cr.

Global and Multicultural Perspectives courses provide thematic treatments of global processes and cross-cultural interactions from a variety of perspectives. Students will gain a sense of human development from pre-history to modern times through consideration of narratives and artifacts of and from diverse cultures. At least one component of each of these courses will involve the indigenous cultures of Hawai'i, the Pacific, and Asia.

2. Diversification requirement (19 credits)

The Diversification requirement is intended to assure that every student has a broad exposure to different domains of academic knowledge, while at the same time allowing flexibility for students with different goals and interests.

A strength of the UHM curriculum is that students can extend their General Education over the full four years of their academic program. Thus, students may meet the Diversification requirement by taking approved lower- and upper-division courses. Some courses that satisfy the Diversification requirement may also simultaneously satisfy Focus or Major requirements.

Arts, Humanities and Literatures (AHL): 6 cr. (from 2 different areas in the Arts, Humanities, or Literatures)

Social Sciences: 6 cr. (from 2 different departments)

Natural Sciences: 7 cr. (3 cr. physical science course, 3 cr. biological science course, plus 1 laboratory cr.)

B. Special UHM Graduation Requirements

1. Focus requirements

The Focus requirements identify important additional skills and discourses, which can be provided through courses across the curriculum. Thus, these requirements can be satisfied through major and Diversification courses. Students should be able to plan their academic program to meet these requirements without adding credits to graduation requirements.

a. Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues: 1 course

The University of Hawai‘i is located in Hawai‘i, a Polynesian archipelago in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Most students who attend UHM are of Hawaiian, Asian or Pacific background, and one of the missions of the University of Hawai‘i in its Strategic Plan is to “stress areas in which Hawai‘i has a natural advantage due to its geography, its environment, its location, and its unique blend of cultures.”

Therefore it is important that all students who attend UHM achieve a basic understanding of how the Native culture of Hawai‘i is similar to and different from the diverse cultures of other Native Pacific Islanders or the Asian countries. As Hawai‘i becomes more of a significant international player in Asia and the Pacific, it is crucial that all students at UHM become familiar with the area in which we study and live.

Courses that satisfy this requirement may be offered in any department. Appropriate courses will have a focus on issues in Hawaiian, Asian, or Pacific cultures and history; this focus will promote cross-cultural understanding as a way to avoid conflict between nations and between cultures.

b. Contemporary Ethical Issues: 1 course

Courses fulfilling this requirement may be offered in any department. Appropriate courses will involve significant reading and discussion on contemporary ethical issues: for example, civil rights and social responsibility; environmental development and control; genetic engineering; computer/internet access and use; population control; health system access and control. Appropriate courses may also involve professional ethics (e.g. business ethics, medical ethics, research ethics); philosophical or religious approaches to ethical questions (e.g. ethical theory, morals and society, Christian ethics in modern life, Comparative ethics); or ethical implications of academic research and its products.

c. Oral Communication: 1 course

Courses fulfilling this requirement may come from across the curriculum. In appropriate courses, group work, individual and group oral reports, and training in oral delivery will constitute a significant portion of the final grade. It is expected that departments may revise courses in the major to meet these aims.

d. Writing Intensive: 5 courses, including 2 numbered 300 or higher

The WI designation may be awarded to undergraduate classes in any department when the course uses writing to promote the learning of course materials; the course provides interaction between the teacher and students while students do assigned writing; written work contributes significantly to each student's course grade; the course requires students to do a substantial amount of writing (minimum of 4,000 words or about 16 typed pages); and class enrollment is restricted to 20 students per instructor to allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing.

2. Hawaiian/Second Language Requirement

Knowledge of a second language increases the student's ability to understand other people; it encourages deeper awareness of the structure of language and its relation to thought, develops sensitivity to other ways of ordering personal experience and social institutions, provides a direct way of comparing another culture to one's own, and provides greater insight into the workings of one's native language. In addition, proficiency in Hawaiian or a second language is an integral part of the university's mission to “prepare students to function effectively in a global society,” to “preserve and promulgate Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific language, history, and culture and [to] provide students an education experience with an international dimension” (The University of Hawai‘i Strategic Plan 1996-2001: “Goals,” sec. 111, C: p. 5; “Action Strategies,” sec. V, 2: p. 9).

Before graduation, students must show competency at the 202 level in Hawaiian or a second language by doing one of the following:

- (a) completing a four-semester sequence (usually 101, 102, 201, 202) in a single language.

- (b) demonstrating competence by taking a UH Mānoa exam if one is offered.
- (c) receiving a language-requirement waiver. For example, waivers may be given to students who are native speakers of a language other than English.

“Back Credits” for Previous Language Experience

All students (including native speakers of a language) under these General Education requirements with experience in a language other than English may earn “back credits.” These students may take any UH Mānoa course, appropriate to their level, in which there is significant use of that language. (Appropriate level determined by placement exam or advisor; significant use determined by the course content.) Upon completion of this course, if students earn a letter grade of C (not C-) or better, they will receive between 3 and 16 back credits (6-8 for first year language; and 6-8 for second year language). The student must take the course for a letter grade (not credit/no credit). Back credits may be earned for only one language. Other restrictions and guidelines may be established by the College of Language, Linguistics, and Literature.

3. Focus Exemption

Through engagement in an extraordinary educational experience approved by the UHM General Education Committee each student may apply for and may receive an exemption from one appropriate Focus requirement.

C. Governance: Administering and Monitoring General Education

Upon revision of the by-laws of the UHM Faculty Senate, a UHM General Education Committee (GEC), an official UH Mānoa Faculty Senate committee, administers the General Education program. The committee develops policies and procedures for implementing and monitoring the General Education program, and undertaking regular assessment of its educational effectiveness.

Under the GEC, faculty boards oversee and direct specific aspects of the core (as done by the Mānoa Writing Program Board for Writing-intensive courses). These boards both review proposals for courses to meet Foundations, Diversification and Focus requirements and foster curriculum development through workshops and colloquia. The Foundations Board includes representatives from the three specified areas; this Board works with individual faculty as well as the learning communities and freshman experience committees to foster the aims and goals of the Foundations requirement courses. Appropriate faculty will be appointed to the Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues Board, the Contemporary Ethical Issues Board and the Oral Communications Board. The Board of the Mānoa Writing Program oversees the Writing-intensive requirement. The GEC and faculty boards will include faculty from diverse backgrounds. An undergraduate student representative will be appointed to the GEC by student government.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

Each College or School determines the number of credits and courses required for degrees involving departments and programs (often called "majors") located within it. The college or school may have additional requirements. These requirements typically specify areas (e.g., 2 courses in management) and number of credit hours (e.g., 9 credits of literature and language).

College requirements are not under the purview of the General Education Committee.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Each department or program sets course and credit requirements for its major. It will also ensure that all students who graduate with the major

- 1) are proficient in the primary information-accessing and information-processing methods of the field; by either integrating such skills within courses or research projects or by recommending an appropriate course offered in another department (computer/info sciences etc.);
- 2) are proficient in the problem-solving and oral communication methods of the field;
- 3) have had training and experience in the modes of inquiry and analysis appropriate to the field. The purpose is to have all students actively engaged in scholarship at a high level, and to avoid having students completing their degrees by means of passive learning alone.

Major requirements are not under the purview of the General Education Committee.

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