

# **THE PROPOSAL FOR MODIFICATION OF UH MANOA GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Adopted by the Manoa Faculty Senate, December 8, 1999**

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

- UH-Manoa General Education requirements
- College requirements (e.g., Arts and Sciences General Education requirements)
- Major requirements.

This proposal 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 proposal 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 proposal. First, General Education requirements are divided into Core requirements and Special UHM Graduation Requirements. Core requirements include foundation courses and diversification requirements. Special UHM Graduation Requirements include focus requirements and a foreign 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 requirements in other categories.

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

a. **Written Communication** (English 100): 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 using 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 credits

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.

At the conclusion of the Freshman year, students will select or be assigned a faculty Mentor in a field of their choice. The student does not formally choose a major. The faculty mentor will discuss with the student future goals and help the student develop an academic plan in relation to exploring those goals, including a coherent combination of courses to meet the remaining General Education requirements in a manner that is consistent with the student's goals and interests. Mentors may be 1) a faculty in a department of program the student anticipates as a future major; 2) one of the faculty from courses taken during the freshman year; 3) a faculty member recommended to the student by an academic advisor, perhaps from the college in which the student has the

most interest. The faculty mentor does not replace college advisors who will continue to guide students' progress toward graduation.

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 any course in the specified area—lower- and upper-division courses, and among courses that meet focus or major requirements.

- Arts, Humanities and Literatures (AHL): 6 cr. (from 2 different departments in the 2 areas not represented by courses taken to fulfill the Foundations Global Perspectives Requirement. For example, students who used History courses for Global Perspectives would here take courses in Arts and Literature; students who took a Religion and a Music course for Global Perspectives would take a Literature course and one other AHL course.)
- Social Sciences: 6 cr. (from 2 different departments)
- Natural Sciences: 7 cr. (3 cr. physical, 3 cr. biological, plus 1 lab 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 and the Asian countries on the Pacific rim. As Hawai'i becomes more of a significant international player in Asia and the Pacific, it is crucial that all students at UHM, Natives and non-Natives (including out-of-state students), become familiar with the arena 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 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 (a minimum of 4000 words, or about 16 pages); and
- class enrollment is restricted to 20 students per instructor to allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing.

**2. Second/Foreign Language Requirement**

In addition to improving written and oral communication and reasoning skills, 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. III, C: p. 5; "Action Strategies," sec. V, 2: p. 9).

The current Hawaiian/second language graduation requirement will be modified in the following manner: before graduation all students must show competency at the 202 level in Hawaiian or a second language. They may, however, demonstrate this proficiency upon admission to the university, based on prior study or experience with a heritage language. Students who can demonstrate proficiency at any level will be granted the appropriate number of credits toward graduation (3-16 credits, depending upon the language and the placement level: i.e., 6-8 credits for placement into the second-year level, 12-16 credits for those who demonstrate proficiency at the 300-level). Individual language departments will be responsible for testing incoming students. All language divisions will be encouraged to develop courses that answer the specific needs of students in technical and professional fields and to work with the Department of Education to move forward in the implementation of the newly created DOE Foreign Language Standards.

#### Waiver Policy

In order to allow for needed flexibility while maintaining the principle of general education requirements, waivers to this requirement may be granted. The exact terms and conditions under which such waivers may be granted are to be determined by the Manoa faculty.

### 3. The "Wild Card" Option

Through engagement in an extraordinary educational experience approved by the UHM General Education Committee (such as a Study Abroad program, a social service internship or undertaking significant study of a third language), each student can earn one wild card. The wild card can be used to satisfy an appropriate 3-credit diversification and/or focus requirement.

## **C. Governance: Administering and Monitoring General Education**

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

Under the GEC, faculty boards will oversee and direct specific aspects of the core (as is now done by the Manoa Writing Program Board for WI courses). These boards will both review proposals for courses to meet Foundations, Diversity and Focus requirements and foster curriculum development through workshops and colloquia. The Foundations-Requirement Board will include representatives from the three specified areas; this Board will work 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 Focus Board, the Contemporary Ethical Issues Board and the Oral Communications Board. The Board of the Manoa Writing Program will continue to oversee the Writing Intensive focus requirement. The GEC and faculty boards will include faculty from diverse backgrounds and undergraduate student representatives appointed by student government.

## **COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS**

Each College or School determines the number of credits required for degrees involving departments and programs (often called “majors”) located within it. The college or school may establish 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).

## **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.