

## **Provost's Advisory Committee for General Education Oversight (PACGEO) Requirements and Guidelines for General Education**

The Provost's Advisory Committee for General Education Oversight (PACGEO) is charged with assessing the OU general education program and determining if it is serving its intended function, i.e., to ensure that each of our students receives a broad, liberal education, regardless of area of specialization; to advise the Provost of our findings; and to provide the day-to-day support necessary to maintain the official general education course listings. PACGEO is appointed by the Norman campus Senior Vice President and Provost and is composed of faculty and staff from the Norman campus and OUHSC who are involved in teaching or advising students about the general education requirements.

### ***General Education Requirements***

**A minimum of 40 credit hours of general education courses is required for graduation. The list of courses approved for general education credit is published in the Class Schedule and is available online at [http://www.ou.edu/enrollment/home/classes\\_offered/general\\_education.html](http://www.ou.edu/enrollment/home/classes_offered/general_education.html). Courses must be distributed among the following areas:**

#### **I. SYMBOLIC AND ORAL COMMUNICATION- (3-6 courses, 9-22 hours)**

- **English Composition** (2 courses, 6 hours).
- **Foreign Language** (2 courses, 6-10 hours). This requirement can be satisfied by successfully completing two semesters of the same foreign language at the college level equivalent to two semesters at OU. It also may be satisfied by successfully completing two years of the same foreign language in high school or by demonstrating an equivalent level of competence on an assessment test. (**Note:** the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of International Studies require students to complete three semesters of college-level foreign language or pass an assessment test. The College of International Studies requirement cannot be met by high school coursework.)
- **Mathematics** (1 course, 3 hours).
- **Other.** Courses in this category are not required, but may be used when additional credit hours are needed to bring the total hours completed to 40. Approved courses in this area include communication, logic and public speaking.

#### **II. NATURAL SCIENCE (2 courses, 7-8 hours)**

At least two courses of three or more credit hours each and totaling a minimum of seven credit hours are required. The courses must be from different disciplines, and at least one course must include a laboratory component, denoted by [L] in the list of general education courses. (**Note:** the College of Arts and Sciences requires its students to complete one course in the Biological Sciences and one course in the Physical Sciences.)

#### **III. SOCIAL SCIENCE (2 courses, 6 hours)**

One course must be Political Science 1113, "*American Federal Government*" (three hours)

#### **IV. HUMANITIES (4 courses, 12 hours)**

- **Understanding Artistic Forms** (1 course, 3 hours)
- **Western Civilization and Culture** (2 courses, 6 hours) One course must be History 1483, "*United States 1492-1865*," or History 1493, "*United States 1865 to Present*." The other course may not be History 1483 or History 1493.

- **Non-Western Culture** (1 course, 3 hours)
- **Note:** the College of Arts and Sciences and College of International Studies require additional upper-division Humanities courses outside the major (2 courses, 6 hours).

## **V. SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE (1 course, 3 hours)**

Designed to culminate a student's undergraduate field of study and place it in a larger social, intellectual and professional context, the capstone experience should be an intensive experience in the major or interdisciplinary field at the senior level of performance. The capstone must include an in-depth writing component.

## **VI. UPPER DIVISION REQUIREMENT**

In addition to the Senior Capstone Experience, at least one of the courses (minimum of 3 hours) used to satisfy the general education requirements must be at the upper division level and outside of the student's major.

### *Guidelines for General Education*

Only courses approved by PACGEO may be used to satisfy OU's general education requirements. PACGEO meets regularly to examine requests from academic units and academic advisors to allow certain courses to satisfy those requirements. There are four main categories of courses that might satisfy general education requirements: those offered at OU; those transferred from another institution that are equivalent to an OU course; those transferred from another institution that are not equivalent to an OU course; and those taken at an institution in another country as part of an OU-sponsored exchange program. Each category is handled differently, as described in the following sections.

### **I. OU Courses**

- A. Policy** – Courses offered at OU will satisfy general education requirements only if so requested by the academic unit offering the course and only after the request is approved by PACGEO.
- B. Procedure** – Requests are submitted to PACGEO by an academic unit or a course-approving body in one of the colleges. Approval or denial by PACGEO is noted in the database describing all OU courses. A list of OU courses approved for general education will be published in the class schedule. Courses denied by PACGEO cannot appear in the listing and will not satisfy general education requirements. Thus, PACGEO will need to make only one such determination for each OU course, unless the academic unit offering the course submits a subsequent (modified) request. An academic unit may also request that a course be removed from the general education list. Removals tend to confuse the advisement process for both students and advisors, and thus should not be approved without considerable prior thought.

### **II. Equated Transfer Courses**

- A. Policy** – Many courses transferred from other institutions are equated to OU courses. This means that an academic unit at OU, or the Office of Admissions, has examined the transfer course and determined that its goals and content significantly overlap with those of a specific course offered at OU. An equated transfer course carries all credits normally awarded for the OU course to which it has been equated, including satisfying general education requirements. If the OU course is accepted for general education credit, then the transfer course is similarly accepted; conversely, if the OU course does not satisfy a general education requirement, the transfer course also will

not satisfy a general education requirement. However, the transfer course may be reviewed by PACGEO to determine whether or not it meets the intent of the general education requirement.

- B. Procedure** – Equating transfer courses to OU courses requires a careful examination of the content of the courses and is undertaken by the academic unit offering the OU course or the Office of Admissions. PACGEO will rarely, if ever, be involved in this procedure.

### III. Unequated Transfer Courses

- A. Policy** – Transfer courses that are not equated to OU courses may still satisfy general education requirements. To facilitate the advising of new transfer students, academic advisors at OU are authorized to certify unequated transfer courses as satisfying general education requirements for an individual student. PACGEO will subsequently review each course so certified to determine whether or not it will be added to the list of transfer courses that satisfy a general education requirement for any student.
- B. Procedure** – When new transfer students discuss their transfer courses with advisors at OU, the advisor may look at the content of an unequated transfer course and make a judgment as to whether or not it satisfies a general education requirement for the student. If so, the advisor may link the course to the general education requirement on the student's A/DA, or simply waive the general education requirement and note how it was satisfied. The advisor must then complete and submit to PACGEO the "General Education Evaluation Form for an Unequated Transfer Course." The documentation used by the advisor as the basis for the decision must be attached to the request. If the committee concurs with the advisor's decision, then that course will be added to the transfer course database and will count as a general education course for all future transfer students who transfer credit for it. If the committee disagrees with the advisors' recommendation, the course will be marked as "rejected" under the general education field on the transfer course database, and the course will not satisfy the general education requirement for future students. *However, the course continues to satisfy the general education requirement for the original student.* If an advisor is uncertain whether or not a course should count for general education credit, he/she may forward it to PACGEO with no recommendation.

### IV. Unequated OU-Sponsored Study Abroad Course

- A. Policy** – OU students participating in an OU-sponsored international exchange program typically enroll in a block of credit hours under the INTL-designation. Course work taken under the INTL designator that equates to an OU course carrying general education designation will automatically satisfy the same requirement as the OU course. Course work taken under the INTL designator that does not equate to an OU course may be submitted to PACGEO for review to determine what, if any, general education requirement the coursework satisfies.
- B. Procedure** – To have study abroad course work evaluated for general education credit, students must present documentation that the international course work is equivalent to an OU general education course or meets the intent of a general education requirement.

It is preferable that the issue of general education credit for an INTL course be addressed before leaving to study abroad. However, should the necessary documentation not be available, the student may seek approval after returning from abroad. The student should discuss this issue with an academic advisor during the pre-departure advising session.

If a student wants the INTL course to be equated to a specific OU general education course, he/she should have it equated by an OU faculty member in the subject area of the course, or by the Office of Admissions.

If the INTL course has no OU equivalent, the student may petition PACGEO either before departing or after returning from abroad. The student should complete the General Education Evaluation Form for an Unequated OU Study Abroad Course and submit it to his/her college academic advisor along with appropriate documentation that the course satisfies an OU general education requirement. Documentation must indicate that both the *content* of the course and the *writing component* meets the intent of the OU general education requirement. Documentation of content could include a course syllabus, the textbook, a copy of the Table of Contents from the textbook, etc. Documentation of the writing component could include the syllabus, copies of exams, papers, etc. The more comprehensive the documentation, the more likely it is that the course will be approved for general education credit.

### ***Requests for Exceptions to General Education Policies***

Requests for exceptions to the general education requirements must be submitted to PACGEO for approval.

All requests from students must be initiated by an academic adviser in the dean's office of the student's college. The adviser should forward the student's petition and all supporting documentation to the chair of PACGEO. The adviser should also indicate in writing the recommendation of the dean (or the dean's designee) of the college in which the student is enrolled. Requests received directly from students will be returned to the college advising office for the required documentation and recommendation.

Requests from an academic unit for an exception to policy should be submitted directly to the chair of PACGEO.