

**THE BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION**

Standards for General Education Courses at Bergen Community College

1. A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must fit within one of the following eight areas of study:²

1. Communications, which includes courses in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and other courses designed to enhance facility in the English language.
2. Humanities, which includes the fields of arts and media, literature, philosophy and religion, and world languages and cultures. General education courses in these fields emphasize cognitive comprehension, appreciation, and criticism of the human intellectual and cultural heritage.
3. Mathematics and Computer Science, which includes courses in college-level mathematics and computer science. General education courses in this area are designed to provide students with a conceptual understanding of the nature and applications of mathematics and computer science, with special emphasis on quantitative reasoning and algorithmic approaches to the specification, analysis, and solution of problems.
4. Technology, which includes courses that emphasizes common computer technology skills (e.g. computer science, information technology) that helps students to access, process, and present information.
5. Natural Sciences, which includes courses in the physical and biological sciences. Such courses focus on the disciplined, scientific study of the natural world and are designed to provide students with a conceptual understanding of the nature of science and its methods of inquiry.
6. Social Sciences, which includes courses in economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology and anthropology. General education courses in the social sciences concentrate on the promotion of self-awareness and social-mindedness in students; on major social, economic, and political problems of contemporary society; and on the responsibilities of citizenship in the modern world.
7. History, which includes any broad-based course(s) or sequence of courses in World, Western, non-Western, or American History.
8. Diversity, which includes courses whose purpose is to expose students to a multicultural society or people, possibly within the context of non-introductory study of a foreign language.

2. A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must provide students with the opportunity to develop writing and critical thinking skills through a variety of appropriate critical thinking and writing assignments.³

3. The following list of fourteen propositions describes key characteristics of a general education course. A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must meet the criteria set forth in these propositions .

Basic Characteristics

1. A general education course is broad, introductory, and foundational in its field.
2. A general education course does not presuppose the student's command of highly technical/specialized language, concepts, knowledge, or skills.
3. A general education course is not "specialized education," which prepares students for particular occupations or specific professional responsibilities. It does not focus narrowly on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.
4. A general education course covers one or more of the subjects typically required of educated persons that form the shared intellectual heritage of our diverse culture.
5. A general education course is general, i.e., not focused upon "majors" or academic and vocational specializations. Its object is "common learning," based upon those realities, experiences, and concerns which all humans share by virtue of their common participation in "the human situation." It seeks the academic and cultural common ground. Its subject matter is part of what all truly educated people have (and ought to have) in common.
6. Critical Thinking : A general education course teaches principles and methods of analytic, critical, and systematic inquiry and reasoning that students then apply to the solution of problems relevant to the discipline being studied, thereby enhancing students' ability to make informed, discriminating, and responsible judgments on the basis of logical and critical analysis and evaluation of ideas, events, and issues.
7. Communication and Writing :A general education course fosters literacy in writing, reading, speaking, and listening.
8. Information Literacy: A general education course fosters forms and levels of information literacy appropriate to the discipline being studied, including the skills and research techniques necessary for effective information access, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and application.
9. Ethical Reasoning: A general education course increases a student's consciousness of the important social and ethical concerns of the day.
10. Intellectual growth :A general education course includes instruction that presents forms of expression, fields of knowledge, and methods of inquiry fundamental to intellectual growth and to an understanding of the world and the human condition.
11. Technological Competency: A general education course includes learning of technological capabilities appropriate to the discipline being studied.

12. Integration, Synthesis, Application: A general education course enhances a student's ability to integrate, synthesize, and apply in various contexts core knowledge and skills learned in their coursework, not only in the single course but within and across other courses and disciplines.
13. Citizenship: A general education course enhances students' abilities to function as responsible citizens.
14. Continuing Learning: A general education course takes students beyond the acquisition of course-specific knowledge and beyond the immediate application of learning and provides them with opportunities for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of learning.

4. A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must address, serve, and support the goals and objectives of the college's general education program, as stated below:

THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BCC GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

(Approved by the BCC Faculty Senate, February 3, 1998)

From 1991 through 1997, the New Jersey County College Project on General Education developed a set of goals and objectives for the general education programs in the state's two year colleges. The Project published the goals and objectives in 1997, and they were subsequently adopted by all of the institutions represented in the Project, including Bergen Community College.

Goals 1, 9 and 10 distinguished from Goals 2-7: All general education courses must include learning that supports goals 1, 9 and 10 and their respective objectives. Goals 2-7 are more discipline-specific, and thus some of these goals may not be individually applicable to every general education course. The discipline areas most directly connected to each of goals 2-7 are designated in brackets for each of those goals.

A proposal seeking general education certification for a course must show how the course addresses Goals 1,8, and 9 and any of Goals 2-7 that may be relevant and must also describe how students will meet the objectives specified for each such goal. (With regard to Goal 10, Ethical Reasoning, the Committee will make plausible exceptions for courses in which introducing ethical issues may be inappropriate or impracticable, e.g., mathematics courses, art or music appreciation courses, etc.)

GOAL 1: Communication – Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Objectives

- 1.1. Students will analyze, comprehend, and evaluate what they read, hear, and see.
- 1.2. Students will state and evaluate the views and findings of others.
- 1.3. Students will write and speak clearly and effectively in standard American English.
- 1.4. Students will logically and persuasively state and support in speech and in writing their points of view or findings.
- 1.5. Students will evaluate, revise, and edit their communications.

GOAL 2: Quantitative Knowledge and Skills – Students will apply appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems. [Mathematics; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences]

Objectives

- 2.1 Students will translate quantifiable problems into mathematical terms and solve these problems using mathematical or statistical operations.
- 2.2 Students will construct graphs and charts, interpret them, and draw appropriate conclusions.

GOAL 3: Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning – Students will develop an understanding of the nature of science and will be able to distinguish science from other fields of study. Students will apply the scientific method of inquiry to draw conclusions based on verifiable evidence; use scientific theories and knowledge to understand the natural world; and explain the impact of scientific theories, discoveries, and technological changes on society. [Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Philosophy; History]

Objectives

- 3.1 Students will define science and describe its limitations.
- 3.2 Using the scientific method and standard laboratory procedures, students will analyze a problem and draw conclusions from data.
- 3.3 Students will distinguish between scientific theory and scientific discovery and between science and its technological application, and will explain the impact of science and technology on society.

GOAL 4: Technological Competency -- Students will use appropriate computer and other technologies to achieve educational and personal goals.

Objectives

- 4.1 Students will use computer systems and/or other appropriate forms of technology to present information.
- 4.2 Students will use appropriate forms of technology to identify, collect, and process information.

Goal 5: Society and Human Behavior -- Students will use social and behavioral science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions. [Social Sciences, History]

Objectives

- 5.1 Students will analyze and discuss behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social or behavioral science.
- 5.2 Students will explain how social institutions and organizations influence individual behavior and how individual behavior influences social institutions and organizations.
- 5.3 Students will describe how social and behavioral scientists gather and analyze data and draw conclusions

GOAL 6: Humanistic Perspective – Students will analyze and evaluate works of the literary, visual, or performing arts. [Art; Music; Theatre; Literature; Philosophy]

Objectives

- 6.1. Students will describe commonly used approaches and criteria for analyzing a work of art.
- 6.2. Students will analyze works of art using commonly used approaches and criteria.

(For this goal, Objective 7.1 deals with the "how-to" process for analyzing a work in the literary, visual, or performing arts, while Objective 7.2 involves students in the actual analyzing of particular works of art. In effect, students will use the analytical approaches studied/learned in 7.1 for achieving the 7.2 Objective.)

GOAL 8: Historical Perspective – Students will analyze historical events and movements in western and/or non-western societies and assess their subsequent significance. [Other Humanities disciplines, Social Sciences, Mathematics? Natural Sciences?]

Objectives

- 7.1 Students will state the causes of a major historical event and analyze the impact of that event on a nation or civilization.
- 7.2 Students will discuss a major idea, movement, invention, or discovery and explain how it affected the world or American society.
- 7.3 Students will show how various interpretations of historical events are influenced by their time, class, culture, and perspective.

GOAL 8: Global and Cultural Awareness– Students will analyze the implications of commonalities and differences among culturally diverse peoples. [Social Sciences; History; other Humanities disciplines; Communications]

Objectives

- 8.1. Students will link cultural practices and perspectives with the geographical and/or historical conditions from which they arose.
- 8.2. Students will explain why an understanding of differences in people's backgrounds is particularly important to American society
- 8.3. Students will recognize and explain the consequences of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions.
- 8.4. Students will recognize the needs and concerns common to culturally diverse peoples.
- 8.5 Students will recognize contributions made by people from various nations and cultures.

Goal 9: Information Literacy -- As they pursue their academic work, students will locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources.

Objectives

- 9.1 Students will identify and address an information need.
- 9.2 Students will access information effectively and efficiently.
- 9.3 Students will evaluate and think critically about information.
- 9.4 Students will use information effectively for a specific purpose.
- 9.5 Students will use information ethically and legally.

GOAL 10: Ethical Perspective – Students will recognize, analyze, and assess ethical issues and situations.

Objectives

- 10.1. Students will identify the ethical implications of an issue or a situation.
- 10.2. Students will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of differing perspectives on an ethical issue or situation.
- 10.3. Students will take a position on an ethical issue or situation and defend it with logical arguments.

5. A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must address one or more of the BCC Core Competencies (listed below).

Core Competencies of Bergen Community College

(From American Colleges and Universities LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes)

Recommended by the General Education Committee and Approved by the Faculty Senate in May 2013

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts
Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Intellectual and Practical Skills

- Inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, aesthetics, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving
Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

Personal and Social Responsibility

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, foundations and skills for lifelong learning
Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

Integrative and Applied Learning

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

6. There is a strong presumption that a course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College will be transferable – as a general education course – to a significant number of the four-year colleges/universities to which most BCC transfer-students currently transfer.

The Committee will determine the general education transferability of a course by utilizing the services of the online NJ Transfer articulation system (www.njtransfer.org).

Currently, the top four transfer target institutions for BCC students are (1) Montclair State University, (2) Ramapo College, (3) Rutgers University (Rutgers College, Douglass College, Livingston College, Newark College of Arts & Sciences, University College), and (4) William Paterson University. Significant but lower numbers of BCC students transfer to (5) Fairleigh Dickinson University (Teaneck), (6) the New Jersey City University, and (7) the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

To meet the strong presumption stated above, a course must be transferable – as a general education course

either (A) to at least three of the following four institutions: (1) Montclair State University, (2) Ramapo College, (3) Rutgers University (one college/campus only), (4) William Paterson University;

or (B) to at least four of the following seven institutions: (1) Montclair State University, (2) Ramapo College, (3) Rutgers University (one college/campus only), (4) William Paterson University, (5) Fairleigh Dickinson University (Teaneck), (6) the New Jersey City University, (7) the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

The Committee is free to consider the certification of a course that fails to meet the aforesaid transferability criteria in the event that, on the basis of clear and convincing evidence and cogent argument, the Committee finds that the course is worthy of such consideration regardless of its low "transfer value." However, the Committee shall exercise this freedom prudently and shall not overturn lightly the strong presumption stated above.