

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Step 4d

Structural Components & Measureable Learning Outcomes

General Education Policy Review Committee

February 23, 2010

(Editorial changes approved by Faculty Senate April 21, 2010)

A proposal for approval by faculty governance.

Index

Mission Statement and Program Goals and Outcomes (Approved by Senate)	3
Proposal	4

UWSP General Education Program

Mission Statement: The General Education Program provides the framework of a liberal education, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate intellectual and personal growth, pursue their advanced studies, and improve the world in which they live.

At UWSP, we believe that a liberal education is essential to living in today's global society. We also believe that global citizenship requires that individuals learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own. Some of these perspectives are cultural and develop from the study of other languages, ethnicities, and beliefs. Some perspectives come from honing new intellectual skills, by learning math and science, for example, or cultivating an understanding of the past and an appreciation of the arts and literature. And some perspectives are the products of unique experiences such as getting involved in a community or studying abroad.

Ultimately, the more students are encouraged to step outside their familiar habits and beliefs, the more they gain the wisdom to see connections between themselves and the world around them, the generosity to empathize with the differences they encounter, and the willingness to place their newfound abilities in the service of a larger community. In this way, a liberal education at UWSP prepares students to be responsible global citizens.

Program Outcomes

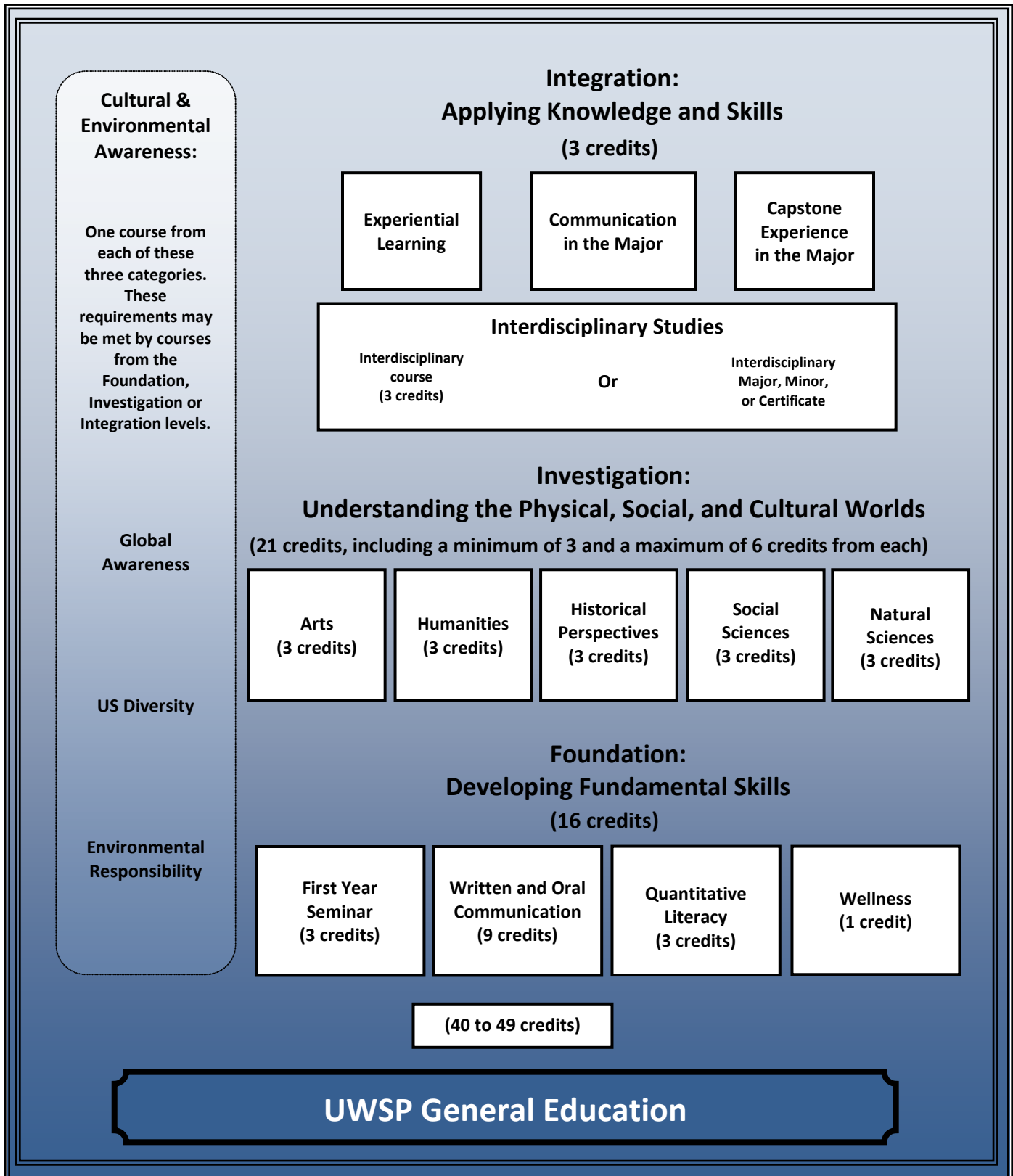
The General Education Program seeks to develop these qualities of global citizenship in four distinct ways. After completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.
- Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.
- Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
- Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

Proposal

Curriculum

Students will fulfill these program outcomes by completing the following General Education requirements:



Foundation: Developing Fundamental Skills

Courses listed under this category are intended to provide students with the basic skills necessary for intellectual development and to succeed in their studies at UWSP, including critical thinking, quantitative literacy, information literacy, written and oral communication, and wellness.

Students will complete 16 credits in this area, including the following:

First Year Seminar (3 credits)

A First Year Seminar is an academically rigorous foundational course for incoming first year students. The course is designed to introduce critical thinking skills, orient students to the academic community and campus life, and equip incoming freshman with other skills necessary to be a successful student. Fostering intellectual inquiry and self-assessment, this course will help students begin the process of taking responsibility for their education, career choices, and personal development.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of a liberal education and the ways in which academic study is structured at UWSP.
- Describe the importance of critical thinking and information literacy and apply the associated skills.
- Identify and apply appropriate note-taking, test-taking, and time-management strategies to their academic studies.
- Describe the importance of co-curricular involvement and how it enhances their academic study at UWSP.
- Identify and utilize UWSP programs, resources, and services that will support their academic studies and co-curricular involvement.
- Develop a plan that demonstrates their responsibility for their own education, specifically how it relates to their interests, abilities, career choices, and personal development.

Written and Oral Communication (9 credits)

Written Communication (6 credits): Introductory writing classes provide an essential foundation of communication skills on which students can build throughout the rest of their university careers and beyond. They develop students' skills in analyzing audience, structuring written documents, and understanding and applying the conventions of effective writing. Subsequent writing courses build upon these skills by helping students learn to locate sources, critically analyze information, and synthesize their ideas with those of others to write well-supported academic arguments. They also provide an essential starting point for the more specialized writing students will be expected to do in the future within their fields of study.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify basic components and elements that shape successful writing such as topic, purpose, genre, and audience.
- Compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Oral communication (3 credits): Learning to speak effectively is an essential part of a liberal education. However, effective communication in today's society requires more than the acquisition of oral presentation skills. UWSP also expects students to develop skills in using visual communications technologies and other media tools in order to enhance presentations and connect more meaningfully with audiences.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify basic components and elements that shape successful oral presentation such as topic, purpose, genre, composure, and audience.
- Compose and deliver an articulate, grammatically correct and organized oral presentation using appropriate communication technologies as well as properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' speaking to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Quantitative Literacy (3 credits)

Quantitative literacy is knowledge of and confidence with basic mathematical/analytical concepts and operations required for problem-solving, decision-making, economic productivity and real-world applications. Such skills are essential for citizens living in today's global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Select, analyze, and interpret appropriate numerical data used in everyday life in numerical and graphical format.
- Identify and apply appropriate strategies of quantitative problem solving in theoretical and practical applications.
- Construct a conclusion using quantitative justification.

Wellness (1 credit)

Wellness is a dynamic process of becoming aware of and making conscious choices toward a more balanced and healthy lifestyle. It is multi-dimensional and holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual wellbeing, and the environment. Wellness is

an essential attribute of a well-rounded, liberally educated person and of strong societies. Understanding the dimensions of wellness and their impact on individuals, families and societies is essential to being a responsible global citizen.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify the seven dimensions of wellness.
- Recognize the interaction between each dimension of wellness and their overall impact on personal, national and global health and well being.
- Develop an individual plan for healthy living that demonstrates an understanding of the principles of wellness.

Investigation: Understanding the Physical, Social, and Cultural Worlds

Building on the skills and knowledge from the foundation level, courses listed under this category are meant to encourage students to acquire broad knowledge of the world in which they live, as well as the various disciplinary methods by which this knowledge is produced. Students will complete 21 credits in this area, including a minimum of 3 credits and a maximum of 6 credits from each category below.

Arts (3-6 credits)

The arts celebrate the human capacity to imagine, to create and to transform ideas into expressive forms. The arts provide us with a rich record of human cultures and values throughout time. They enable us to understand and enjoy the experience of our senses and to sharpen our aesthetic sense. Courses in the arts examine the process of creativity, and explore the artistic imagination or the relationship between artists, their works and the societies in which their works are produced. The arts challenge us to understand creativity and the distinctive intellectual process of the human imagination.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify aesthetic, cultural, and historical dimensions of artistic traditions and techniques.
- Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by critiquing, creating, or collaborating on a specific work of art.
- Express their own understanding and interpretation of works of art critically and imaginatively.

Humanities (3-6 credits)

The humanities explore the fundamental ideas and values shaping cultures and civilization, in life and as represented in the written word, using scholarly approaches that are primarily analytical, critical, or interpretive. By introducing students to concepts and beliefs within and outside their own perspectives, courses in the humanities help students

to understand and critically engage a variety of worldviews and the ideas that give them meaning.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, speak clearly, think critically, or write persuasively about cultures and cultural works/artifacts (including texts, images, performances, and technologies, as well as other expressions of the human condition).
- Identify and analyze how beliefs, values, languages, theories, or laws shape cultures and cultural works/artifacts.
- Engage a variety of ideas and worldviews critically by formulating reflective and informed moral, ethical, or aesthetic evaluations of cultures and cultural works/artifacts.

Historical Perspectives (3-6 credits)

An understanding of the past and the methods by which people seek to explain it are essential to finding meaning in the present. By exploring the evolution of human societies—their institutions, ideas, and values—students gain a framework for understanding themselves and the world; and they learn to make connections between history and the natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe events from past cultures, societies, or civilizations.
- Recognize the varieties of evidence that historians use to offer diverse perspectives on the meaning of the past.
- Identify the role of human agency in shaping events and historical change.
- Explain historical causality.
- Evaluate competing historical claims that frequently inform the present.

Social Sciences (3-6 credits)

The social sciences provide students with an understanding of humans and their behavior as individuals and within communities, institutions, and social structures. Courses in this category equip students to contribute to public discourse and function as responsible citizens of their professions and communities.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Define the major concepts and methods used by social scientists to investigate, to analyze, or to predict human or group behavior.
- Explain the major principles, models, and issues under investigation by the social sciences.
- Examine how the individual or groups of individuals are influenced by social, cultural, or political institutions both in their own culture and in other cultures.

Natural Sciences (3-6 credits)

As the progress of our society becomes more dependent on science and technology, our future becomes increasingly dependent upon a scientifically literate population. Individuals today must be sufficiently knowledgeable about scientific facts, science applications, and the process of scientific inquiry in order to make reasoned decisions concerning their use in addressing society's problems. Courses in this area must contain a laboratory component to help students develop an understanding of scientific inquiry.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify the basic taxonomy and principles of the scientific method as it pertains to the natural, physical world.
- Infer relationships, make predictions and solve problems based on an analysis of evidence or scientific information.
- Apply scientific concepts, quantitative techniques and methods to solving problems and making decisions.
- Describe the relevance of some aspect of the natural science to their lives and society.

Integration: Applying Knowledge and Skills

Courses listed under this category are meant to build on the earlier components of the General Education Program, giving students the opportunity to develop, integrate, and apply the knowledge and skills they learned. Students will complete at least 3 credits in this area, as well as several additional requirements.

Interdisciplinary Studies (3 credits)

Under this category, students are asked to complete one of three options: a single three-credit interdisciplinary course; an Interdisciplinary Certificate; or an Interdisciplinary Major or Minor. Each option encourages students to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in the context of a topic of their choosing, and to do so in ways that facilitate making connections across disciplines. In this way, students learn to recognize that issues can be viewed in multiple ways, and that solving problems requires integrating and harmonizing these perspectives.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify an issue or question related to the interdisciplinary course(s), and describe what each discipline contributes to an understanding of that issue.
- Explain the benefits of being able to combine these contributions.

Experiential Learning (non-GEP credit)

Students benefit from opportunities to learn by reflecting on experiences beyond their typical classroom activities and by applying the knowledge and skills they gain from traditional courses in new settings.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete an approved experiential learning project.
- Reflect on the experiential learning project in order to gain further understanding of their university education, and an enhanced sense of one's personal responsibility as a member of a larger community.

Communication in the Major (non-GEP credit)

Communication in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Capstone Experience in the Major (non-GEP credit)

A capstone experience is either a single seminar or a broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of a student's program of study. It is meant to provide students the opportunity to make connections between the key learning objectives of their majors and the General Education Program Outcomes, and to consider how their educations have prepared them for the world beyond the university.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

Cultural and Environmental Awareness

Courses listed in this area are meant to foster greater awareness of cultural and environmental issues that currently shape today's world as a means of better preparing students for responsible citizenship. Students will complete 3 credits in each area below. But since these courses are

intended to be cross-listed as requirements in other parts of the general education curriculum, for most students, they should require no additional credits.

Global Awareness

Global Awareness courses examine the unique cultural, political, economic, intellectual, and/or religious components of societies, countries, regions, and peoples that are distinct from those found within the United States. By learning about these cultures, students can appreciate the key differences and similarities between diverse modes of human life and reach a better understanding of the human condition on a global scale. Moreover, this understanding will prepare students to act thoughtfully and responsibly in a global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain various components of a culture that is distinct from those found within the United States.
- Analyze how cultural similarities and differences are negotiated in ways that help shape the modern world.

U.S. Diversity

U.S. Diversity courses are designed to consider the role of diversity in American life, where diversity is defined to include both individual differences (e.g. personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and other group and social differences (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, country of origin, class, sexual identity/orientation, religion, ability, or other affiliations). Satisfaction of this requirement will prepare students to act thoughtfully and responsibly as a U.S. citizen in a global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe the various dimensions of diversity and marginalization within the United States.
- Explain the means by which one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have negotiated the conditions of their marginalization.

Environmental Responsibility

Maintaining a sustainable natural environment is necessary to the long-term survival of all organisms, including humans. An understanding of the individual, social, cultural, and natural factors that influence and contribute to environmental sustainability and ecosystem function is, therefore, essential to responsible global citizenship.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Recognize areas of interaction between human society and the natural environment.
- Identify the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing scientific claims that inform environmental debates.