

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders  
From: Juan Sánchez Muñoz, President  
Subject: General Education Program

UH-Downtown/PS 03.A.41  
Issue No. 1  
Effective Date: 04/27/2018  
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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy Statement (PS) describes the General Education Program at UHD, as well as the membership and responsibilities of the General Education Committee. It also outlines the content, maintenance, assessment, and oversight of the General Education Program.
- 1.2 General Education defines what is central to the college experience and what the common standards are that are used to measure the intellectual development of all students. See [UHD General Education founding document](#).

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 General Education Program (GEP): The GEP refers to those curricular requirements that are required of all UHD students. General education is a university-wide curriculum that is the foundation of all degree programs at UHD and includes the state-mandated core curriculum as well as any other courses that are required of all degree plans.
- 2.2 Common Core Curriculum: State-mandated set of lower division coursework for all public institutions of higher education in Texas (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>).
- 2.3 UHD Common Core Curriculum: Set of lower division courses identified to satisfy state Common Core requirements.
- 2.4 General Education Committee (GEC): The GEC, a standing committee that is advisory to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC), oversees the GEP.
- 2.5 Foundational Component Area: The Texas Higher Education Coordination Board has identified nine Foundational Component Areas (FCA) required in all core curricula for state public institutions of higher education. Each FCA has a component description as definition, a set number of Semester Credit Hours (SCH) required for completion of a component, and specified core objectives requirements. The nine FCA are:
  - Communication (6 SCH)
  - Mathematics (3 SCH)
  - Life and Physical Sciences (6 SCH)
  - Language, Philosophy and Culture (3 SCH)
  - Creative Arts (3 SCH)
  - American History (6 SCH)
  - Government/Political Science (6 SCH)
  - Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 SCH)

- The Component Area Option (6 SCH)

Source: [THECB](#)

### 3. POLICY

- 3.1 The GEP requires faculty oversight, review, and ongoing assessment. This oversight is done by the GEC.

UHD is responsible for ensuring the credibility, compliance, and integrity of the GEP. While individual faculty, academic programs, and academic departments have the task of offering the courses within the GEP, the entire academic community of UHD has ownership of the GEP.

- 3.2 GEC Role and Membership

- 3.2.1 The GEC has oversight in the following areas:

- Education of the university community about the GEP.
- Assessment of the GEP, including recommendations based on assessment results and processes
- Curriculum and policy related to the GEP

- 3.2.2 The GEC makes recommendations to the UCC regarding any changes to the GEP and the courses therein.

- 3.2.3 The GEC ensures that the GEP website is up to date and contains all necessary forms and calendars for the program.

- 3.2.4 The membership of the GEC includes the following:

Voting members include the following:

- One tenured/tenure-track faculty member from each academic degree-granting department,
- One full-time faculty member from University College

Non-Voting members may include the following:

- 2 administrative representatives appointed by the Provost
- A liaison from the University Curriculum Committee appointed by UCC.
- Other participants as requested by the General Education Committee with notification to UCC.

- 3.2.5 Greater than 50% of the total of voting members of GEP shall constitute a quorum. Except for the definition of the quorum, the GEC generally operates by Robert's Rules of Order.

- 3.2.6 Selection of voting members: Departmental representatives should be selected according to procedures determined in each academic department. Each Department Chair should notify the UCC Chair of their departmental representative for the following academic year by the first Monday of May.
- 3.2.7 The UCC Chair will work with the Senior Vice President and Provost's Office to ensure that GEC appointment letters are sent as per all university-wide committees by the first Monday in June.
- 3.2.8 Each college will have staggered three-year terms among departments to ensure continuity on the GEC. The UCC will ensure implementation and maintenance of the three-year terms.
- 3.2.9 At the final meeting of each academic year, the GEC Chair for the following academic year will be elected by the voting members.
- 3.2.10 The system underlying the UHD's GEP model requires time and labor, especially from the GEC Chair, that is well beyond the scope of committee service. Therefore, the University shall provide the GEC Chair sufficient resources and release time (recommended one release per long semester) to carry out these responsibilities. The Provost will review and allocate resources in consultation with the UCC and the GEC.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 GEP Core Course Revision Process: Changes to the UHD Common Core require university-level approval as well as state-level approval. The process for proposing a new course, removing a course, or changing a course for the GEP requires the following steps:
- New courses, or existing courses that are being modified, are submitted through the usual curricular approval process, but accompanied by the form required for the area of the GEP for which they are being proposed.
  - Once proposals arrive at the UCC, they are sent (without consideration by the UCC at this time) to the GEC.
  - GEC reviews the request, keeping in mind the following:
    - Impact on ability to offer sufficient sections of courses to satisfy a foundational component area
    - Whether the course is currently required for any degree plans (and those plans cannot be satisfied by any other course)
    - Whether the course achieves the outcomes of that foundational component area and the assignments are appropriate for the core outcomes
    - Input from advising regarding possible impact on student access to needed courses
  - GEC returns its recommendations to the UCC before the next UCC meeting, to be either approved or sent for revisions.

- 4.1.1 If the proposal involves a part of the GEP governed by the state, it must be sent to the THECB for final approval. This could be a full year, depending on timing. For courses being removed, the course must continue to be offered if needed to support key areas.
- 4.1.2 The GEC will publish the timeline for submission of changes in each academic year, as related to UHD's annual submission of institutional changes to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- 4.2 General Education Assessment Processes and Timelines: The GEC is responsible for maintaining, adjusting, and publicizing to faculty the goals, timelines, and activities for assessment and review of the GEP curriculum.
- 4.2.1 The GEC will review schedules annually and publish on the General Education Website a calendar of assessment activities for each academic year by the first Wednesday in September. The calendar will include the following elements:
- Dates for notice to faculty who will submit artifacts; that notice should be given prior to the semester in which they will have to submit artifacts for assessment.
  - Dates for collection of artifacts.
  - Dates for annual assessment of artifacts.
- 4.2.2 The GEC may establish committees and/or recruit additional faculty or staff to assist with any part of the assessment cycle as needed.
- 4.2.3 The GEC will share results of assessment with the university community annually and provide opportunities for all faculty to share interpretations and suggestions for improvement, and specific solicitation of suggestions from faculty whose courses serve the outcomes under consideration in each assessment cycle.
- 4.3 The UCC will inform Chairs and Program Coordinators in disciplines whose courses will be affected by the follow-up strategies from an assessment cycle. The GEP is critical for university compliance and accreditation; therefore, once recommendations for change have been finalized by the UCC, any compliance issues will be addressed through consultation between UCC and the Provost.
- 4.4 All proposals for changes to the GEP structure beyond those that are described in 4.1 are drafted by the GEC but can be done via a charge from some other body. The process for changes to the GEP structure are as follows:
- If the GEC determines that changes are needed, GEC will gather input from the faculty at large.
  - The GEC will draft changes and send to the UCC for consideration.
  - Once the UCC approves a draft, UCC sends to the Faculty Senate for discussions and comment. In addition, UCC will distribute any drafts to faculty and

administration at large. Comments and feedback will be considered by GEC and UCC.

- Final changes to the GEP must be approved by UCC and then approved by the Provost.
- If a proposal affects a part of the GEP controlled by the State (e.g., the Common Core), approved proposals are forwarded to the state once they have final approval within UHD.
- If changes are made to the GEP via the process stated here, this policy needs to be sent through the policy change process so that the policy language reflects the new curriculum.

## **5. EXHIBITS**

There are no exhibits associated with this policy statement.

## **6. REVIEW PROCESS**

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost

Review: Every five years, or as necessary.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

## **7. POLICY HISTORY**

There are no prior issues of this policy.

## **8. REFERENCES**

[THECB](#)  
[General Education website](#)