General Education Goals, SLO's, and Info About Gen Ed Courses

Harold Washington College Assessment Committee, 2019

General Education Goals:

The broad goals below have been approved by the HWC Assessment Committee and illustrate the foundation skills every student should possess.

1. Civic Engagement: To demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values required for civic engagement on a local, national, and global level.

2. Critical Thinking: To think critically and to analyze and solve problems.

3. Effective Communication (Information and Computer Literacy, Oral, and Written): To communicate effectively, orally and in writing, and use information resources and technology competently.

4. Human Diversity: To understand and respect human diversity in regard to the full range of cognitive, behavioral, and effective practices and interactions through which human beings share life in common spaces, affected by: race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, socio-economic status, age, religion, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status, health, religion, education, political beliefs, physical attributes and disabilities, veteran status, and other differences in cultural expression and tradition.

5. Humanities and the Arts: To understand and appreciate the arts, literature, history, and philosophical systems of major world cultures.

6. Natural Sciences: To understand the major principles of the natural sciences and the application of the scientific method to biological, physical, and environmental systems.

7. Quantitative Reasoning: To use mathematics for computation, reasoning, and problem solving.

8. Social Sciences: To understand cultures, institutions, and patterns of human behavior and the application of the scientific method to their (the student's) study.

Below are the specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for each of the goals, as approved by the HWC Assessment Committee. Some of the goals also include definitions for the sake of clarity.

1. Civic Engagement

General Education Goal: To demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values required for civic engagement on a local, national, and global level.

Definition: The ability of students to reason which results in the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference of the argument or the problem situation on which the judgment or solution is based.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of a certificate or degree students will:

1. Describe their civic environment in terms of demographics and community.

2. Articulate one's position on a pivotal social problem or civic matter.

3. Demonstrate an active role in a community context, such as school , work, service, co-curricular activities, neighborhood, or social group.

4. Examine the civic issues encountered and the insights gained from community experiences.

5. Articulate multiple positions on society's divisive political issues, past and present.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2018

2. Critical Thinking

General Education Goal: To think critically and to analyze and solve problems.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the general education requirement for critical thinking, students will demonstrate:

1. Interpretation skills by formulating categories, making comparisons, and classifying and grouping data, findings, and opinions; distinguishing between direct and indirect persuasion; and clarifying meaning.

2. Analysis skills by detecting an argument and analyzing an argument.

3. Evaluation skills by…

   a. Evaluating the importance of an argument; the reasonableness of an argument; the credibility and reliability of sources of information; statistical information used as evidence to support an argument; how well an argument anticipates possible objectives or alternative positions; bias and contradictions in a person's point of view; clear and consistent use of language.

   b. Determining if an argument rests on biased assumptions; how new data might confirm or question a conclusion; and how an argument makes sense.

c. Judging the appropriateness of stated or unstated values or standards upheld in an argument; the consistency of supporting reasons; and the strength of an argument.

4. Inferences skills by collecting and questioning evidence; developing alternative hypotheses; and drawing conclusions

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2006

3ABC. Effective Communication (Information and Computer Literacy, Oral, and Written)

General Education Goal: To communicate effectively, orally and in writing, and use information resources and technology competently.

(A) Information and Computer Literacy Definition: The set of skills that enables individuals to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Determine the nature of the information needed in a given context.

2. Identify available resources of different types (e.g., books, journal articles) and formats (e.g., print, electronic).

3. Access and navigate information resources and services effectively.

4. Evaluate sources of information based on standard criteria (e.g., accuracy, authority, reliability, and relevance).

5. Organize new information efficiently and integrate it with other information or material.

6. Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information (e.g., source attribution, intellectual property).

(B) Oral Communication Definition: Oral communication encompasses all the abilities necessary for effective expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in oral form.

Student Learning Outcomes: The student will be able to:

1. Create structured, effective presentations with relevant supportive material for the specific context and academic or professional domain.

2. Demonstrate command of vocabulary, language and content appropriate to the audience and students' academic or professional field.

3. Employ effective oral communication techniques in a range of group settings.

4. Express respect for human diversity through oral communications in a range of contexts

(C) Written Communication:

Student Learning Outcomes: The student will be able to:

1. Compose texts across multiple disciplines and for various audiences, occasions, and purposes;

2. Construct texts for communication, information, and expression which adhere to the rules of Standard Written English;

3. Compose texts that are focused, well-organized, and well-developed.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: Information and Computer Literacy in 2015, Oral Communication in 2015, and Written Communication in 2011

4. Human Diversity:

General Education Goal: To understand and respect human diversity in regard to the full range of cognitive, behavioral, and effective practices and interactions through which human beings share life in common spaces, affected by: race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, socio-economic status, age, religion, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status, health, religion, education, political beliefs, physical attributes and disabilities, veteran status, and other differences in cultural expression and tradition.

Definition: Human diversity is defined by such things as: age, citizenship, education, ethnicity, gender, health, language, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, physical attributes and disabilities, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other differences in cultural expression and tradition.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the general education requirement for diversity, students will:

1. Identify a variety of cultural expressions and understand the contexts of those expressions through time, with acceptance and respect.

2. Recognize stereotypes, generalizations, and misperceptions of culture as limiting and potentially damaging.

3. Recognize one's own cultural and personal biases and the impact these have on a variety of learning and life situations.

4. Demonstrate an active and regular engagement in exploring cultures, perspectives, and experiences different from one's own, moving beyond tolerance toward embracing and celebrating these rich differences.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2012

5. Humanities and the Arts:

General Education Goal: To understand and appreciate the arts, literature, history, and philosophical systems of major world cultures.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the General Education Requirements in arts and the humanities, students will demonstrate:

1. Analyze artifacts (i.e., artistic products of human creativity) across multiple cultures for evidence of historical period, relations to major artistic movements, and basic elements, techniques, and conventions of the related discipline(s).

2. Evaluate artifacts according to criteria provided by disciplinary experts as well as students' own invention.

3. Interpret artifacts for meaning, justifying their view using evidence from the "text" of the artifact (e.g., convention, technique, technical vocabulary, theoretical lense).

4. Communicate clearly and effectively an appreciation for artifacts.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2016

6. Natural Sciences:

General Education Goal: To understand the major principles of the natural sciences and the application of the scientific method to biological, physical, and environmental systems.

Definition: The Natural Sciences encompass the life sciences (Biology, Zoology, and Botany) and the physical sciences (Physics, Chemistry, and Earth Sciences - Geology, Meteorology Oceanography and Astronomy). The Scientific Method is the process used to explore nature, and it is based on observations, predictions, experimental investigations, and theoretical explanations of natural phenomena. Application of the scientific method reveals patterns in the observed phenomena, which leads to the fundamental concepts, theories, and laws of the life and physical sciences.

Student Learning Outcomes: The student will be able to:

1. Formulate reasonable explanations of natural phenomena based on thorough observations.

2. Interpret and articulate scientific results that are presented in verbal, graphic and/or tabular form.

3. Critically evaluate scientific resources and scientific claims presented in the media.

4. Apply steps of the scientific method to solve problems.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2015

7. Quantitative Reasoning:

General Education Goal: To use mathematics for computation, reasoning, and problem solving.

Definition: The application of basic mathematics skills, such as algebra, to the analysis and interpretation of real-world quantitative information in the context of a discipline or an interdisciplinary problem to draw conclusions that are relevant to students in their daily lives. (Source: Association of American Colleges & Universities, https://www.aacu.org/peerreview/2014/summer/elrod)

Student Learning Outcomes: The student will be able to…

1. Interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, and tables.
2. Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally.
3. Apply arithmetical, algebraic, geometric or statistical methods in order to solve problems.
4. Estimate values with reasonable accuracy when exact calculations are impossible, impractical, or unnecessary.
5. Recognize and use connections within mathematics and between mathematics and other disciplines.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2017

8. Social Sciences:

General Education Goal: To understand cultures, institutions, and patterns of human behavior and the application of the scientific method to their (the student's) study.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the general education requirements in Social Science, the student will be able to:

1. Explain in oral and written form, and through the use of technology, the interdisciplinary approach of the seven social sciences toward investigating society.
2. Apply the scientific method using relevant research designs.
3. Formulate questions and evaluate theories, concepts and philosophies about social phenomenon.
4. Explain and defend one's own position and arguments about social issues as applied to the personal pursuit of a quality life.

Last Updated, Approved, and Assessed: 2010