

## Policy on Individual Student Non-course Alternatives to the Category 1 and/or 2 Courses of the Diversity Graduation Requirement – “The Diversity Experience” (Updated 03/2009)

**Introduction:** There are three types of alternatives to meeting the UVM diversity criteria requirements other than approved UVM D1 or D2 courses: 1) transfer credit from other institutions; 2) UVM non-course activities; and 3) individual student diversity experiences. The second and third alternatives are addressed in this document. For the second alternative, the leader, faculty member or coordinator of UVM non-course activities may use the same procedures on behalf of a group of students.

**Policy Goal:** To have mechanisms in place so all or part of the diversity competencies can be met through an individual student “diversity experience”, or non-course “experience”. “It is recognized that the diversity competencies can also be acquired through non-course experiences. Consequently, students may petition the Diversity Curriculum Review Committee (DCRC) to have one or both of the diversity course requirements waived if they can demonstrate they have acquired substantial diversity competencies through other, non-credit, diversity experiences.”<sup>1</sup>

To petition for an alternative to a diversity course requirement, the student must first submit an application form and proposal to the DCRC containing:

- 1) a description (**attachment A**) of the proposed non-credit diversity experience explicitly stating how the experience meets the criteria of a D1 or D2 course (regardless of whether or not the diversity experience has already been completed), and
- 2) a plan (**attachment B**) demonstrating how the student will or did attain the diversity competencies after completion of the diversity experience (e.g., through a significant paper, presentation, or other relevant tangible product).

“Students should be aware that petitions for alternatives to the diversity requirement will not be granted lightly, and the burden is on the student to sufficiently demonstrate such an alternative is warranted.”<sup>2</sup>

There is no appeal process. “Decisions regarding petitions for alternatives to diversity course requirements are final, and students denied the alternative will not be given the opportunity to revise their demonstrations of progress for reconsideration.”<sup>3</sup>

### NOTES:

1. This policy does not apply to courses studied at other institutions. Possible fulfillment of the UVM diversity requirement using courses from other institutions is covered elsewhere (see DCRC Transfer Course Policy).
2. This policy can apply to group activities organized by UVM or UVM faculty such as international experiences. If the leader or coordinator of such a program wishes to apply using these procedures on behalf of all participating students this is allowable.
3. Being granted acceptance of diversity experience waives the requirement to take a D1 or D2 course (or both) to meet this graduation requirement but does not grant course credit to the student.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Six-Credit Diversity Graduation Requirement approved by the faculty senate 4/10/2006

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

**Process (for proposed future activities):**

1. Student or activity coordinator completes the attached application form<sup>4</sup> and provides attachment A and B.
2. Student or activity coordinator submits to the appropriate College Dean (or Dean's designate).
3. If the College Dean deems the experience meets the criteria and the confirmation letter is valid (College Dean may confirm by e-mail or letter), the application is forwarded to the appropriate sub-committee of the DCRC.
4. A decision is made by the sub-committee within 60 days using the criteria below.
5. After the activity has been completed and the reflective product produced the application is re-submitted with both a letter of confirmation and the product.

**Process (for activities that have already been completed):**

1. Student or coordinator completes the application form and provides attachment A and B.
2. Student or activity coordinator submits to the appropriate College Dean (or Dean's designate).
3. If the College Dean deems the experience meets the criteria and the confirmation letter is valid (College Dean may confirm by e-mail or letter), the application is forwarded to the appropriate sub-committee of the DCRC.
4. A decision is made by the sub-committee within 60 days using the criteria below.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. The student involvement in the experience must consist of a time equivalent to a course (at least 100 hours for each of D1 and D2.)
2. For Category 1 the activity must directly address race and racism in the U.S and for Category 2 must directly address human and societal diversity.
3. The activity must explicitly involve development of personal competencies regarding diversity as outlined for Category 1 or 2, and include a reflective experience and product documenting that experience. Diversity criteria and competencies are listed at the end of this document.

**Examples (not comprehensive) of “experiences” NOT deemed as an alternative “diversity experience”:**

- Having friends or family members of diverse backgrounds
- Pleasure, social or recreational travel
- Membership in a club or group with diverse membership unless the missions and goals of the group include education or work on issues related to diversity
- Viewing videos, movies or other similar popular media
- High school program or activity even if it fits within the subject topic
- Study abroad where the course topics are not diversity

**Examples (not comprehensive) of “experiences” which may constitute an alternative “diversity experience”:**

- Teaching a course at any educational level which meets the goals of Category 1 or 2
- Independent research on a topic directly within the topics for Category 1 and 2 courses which resulted in a manuscript, video, movie or website of some type
- Implementation of a program for a population included in Category 1 or 2
- Participation in an on-line course, workshop or conference of sufficient length, at least 100 hours, where the student's active involvement or completion can be demonstrated
- Summer internships or research work (volunteer or paid) consistent with the objectives of Category 1 or 2 diversity courses.

## **Diversity Criteria and Competencies**

The following is extracted from the UVM policy for reference in determining whether a proposed experience meets the intent of this curriculum requirement.

**Category 1 (D1) - Race & Racism in the United States:** Courses in this category must address and have a substantive content addressing topics of race and racism in the United States as it pertains to ALANA populations. The course must promote an understanding of:

### Criteria for Category 1

- Race and racism in the United States;
- The meaning of power and privilege;
- The importance and impact of diversity and multiculturalism in United States society; and,
- Include content that fosters self reflection regarding one's own prejudices in a manner that is observable by the instructor.

**Category 2 (D2) - Human and Societal Diversity:** Courses in this broader category must promote an understanding of and an appreciation for at least one of the many facets of human and/or societal diversity including but not limited to:

### Criteria for Category 2

- Non-United States cultures, past or present;
- The workplace, organization, and/or the community;
- Global or international issues, including the flow of people, cultures, labor, capital, diseases, or resources past or present, across or within all international / multinational geographical borders;
- Backgrounds and/or orientations related to race ethnicity, religion, class/socio-economic status, language, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other socially constructed categories; and/or,
- Interventions and /or techniques to serve the needs of diverse groups in society.

## **Diversity Competencies**

- 1) A multidisciplinary appreciation of diverse cultures, communities, and histories that constitute U.S. society, as well as awareness of global issues regarding diversity.
- 2) An understanding of U.S. traditions of democracy, active citizenship and how they may serve as a means to understand and resolve conflicts linked to race, class, ethnicity, and gender issues.
- 3) An ability to describe the nature, historical patterns, and demographics of American society in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and class differences.
- 4) An ability to carry out an intellectual discourse with diverse peoples for the purpose of evaluating public policy and creating a shared future vision of American society.
- 5) The development of problem solving and analytical skills about diversity, while acquiring an understanding of the diversity of American culture and other cultures across the globe.
- 6) Knowledge of the origins and systemic nature of prejudice, discrimination and oppression that has been directed toward people of diverse backgrounds and orientations.
- 7) A capacity to visualize and imagine public situations or issues involving diversity from multiple perspectives. The development of capacity to construct action plans for dealing with issues of diversity in the workplace, organizations, and the community.
- 8) An understanding of the current experiences and issues in the United States of different racial groups (including discrimination in all forms, life experiences of racial groups and white privilege).

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**Section 1 (To be completed by student or activity coordinator)**

Date prepared \_\_\_\_\_ Is this a new application? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Is this a submission of post-experience product for a previously approved activity? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Activity start date \_\_\_\_\_ End date \_\_\_\_\_ Total hours \_\_\_\_\_

Location of activity \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s name \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Email \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_ Program/Dept \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed experience will fulfill: UVM D1 \_\_\_\_ UVM D2 \_\_\_\_ requirement.

**Important! Please provide the following information, as attachments, with this application.**

**Attachment A:** Describe the proposed non-credit diversity experience, explicitly stating how the experience meets the criteria of a D1 or D2 course, regardless of whether the experience has been completed or not, plus a second attachment as necessary below:

**Attachment B:** If this activity has already been completed, provide evidence that the student attained the diversity competencies, e.g., through a significant paper (10 or more pages), presentation (PowerPoint), or other relevant and tangible product. In addition, if the activity has already been completed, please provide a **letter of confirmation** including full contact information from an official associated with the diversity experience.

**Attachment B:** If the activity has not yet been completed, provide the plan for how the student intends to fulfill the diversity competencies, e.g., through a significant paper (10 or more pages), presentation (PowerPoint), or other relevant and tangible product.

**Section 2 (Approval of academic advisor)**

**Advisor’s Name (Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3 (Approval of college, dean or signatory)**

**Dean’s Name (Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4 (Approval of DCRC)**

**Chair’s Name (Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_