General Education Ad Hoc Committee Reports, March 2020
Submitted to: Faculty Senate Executive Council; General Education Task Force

The attached reports represent current drafts of the General Education requirements, as presented by the individual ad hoc committees tasked with refining them. *They are intended as advisory to the General Education Alignment Task Force and the Faculty Senate, and are not final drafts*. In some cases, the ad hoc committee recommendations require significant changes to the framework proposed in January 2020. Framework considerations are not being taken lightly, and any such changes would include thorough discussion of impacts on students across the university, as well as capacity needs. The Task Force expects to post the refined General Education Framework in mid-April; changes to the framework will be based on feedback and discussion of these ad hoc reports in the Faculty Senate meeting of 3/23, and in online open forums scheduled for 3/25 and 3/31. Given the short time frame, we anticipate that additional refinements to the approval criteria and student outcomes will be needed next fall. However, the goal of the Task Force remains to present an overall framework to the Faculty Senate for approval this semester.

Open forums (URL will connect to a Teams meeting):
3/25 from 11-12:30   http://go.uvm.edu/eh3v6

3/31 from 11:30-1   http://go.uvm.edu/rgyto

Background:

In early February 2020, [seven ad hoc committees](#) were empaneled to consider each of the proposed new categories in the [draft General Education Framework](#). All of the committees addressed key questions regarding the place of their category or categories in the framework and most completed drafts of revised category descriptions, approval criteria, and in some cases, student learning outcomes. Documents outlining these are included in this report. For more information on committee membership and nomination process, or the draft framework, please see the links above. For more information on the current General Education categories, to which no changes are proposed, please visit the [General Education website](#).

The General Education framework proposed in January included:
1. A vision for General Education at UVM that will guide the development of the requirements and framework: *UVM General Education should expose students to the intellectual breadth of the liberal arts, develop the skills needed to integrate and apply diverse areas of knowledge, and build the foundations for lifelong learning and active participation in local and global communities.*
2. 18 credits of liberal arts (six credits in each of three categories: Humanities and Arts; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences)
3. 12 credits in Core Skills areas (three credits each in four categories: FWIL; QR; Communications2 (WIL2 or Oral Communication); and Integration and Application of Knowledge in the Major)
4. 12 credits in Common Ground Values (6 credits of D1/D2 as currently configured; 3 credits of SU; 3 credits of Global Citizenship; and a co-requirement in Social Justice in

which one course in the other Common Ground values categories would need to also carry a social justice designation)

5. A total of 42 credits. Students may take courses that fulfill more than one category at once, but they still must take a total of 40 credits of courses approved in one of the Gen Ed categories.

Significant Changes Proposed by the Committees:

These recommendations were provided by separate ad hoc committees to the General Education Alignment Task Force, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In creating the refined framework, the Task Force will consider the Gen Ed curriculum as a whole, the general education vision and goals, the feasibility of implementation of ad hoc committee suggestions, and other feedback.

Most of the ad hoc committees reaffirmed the importance of their category to the overall framework, and focused on resolving questions regarding the purpose and description of the category, establishing basic course approval criteria, and where time allowed, drafting student learning outcomes. The Humanities and Arts committee changed the name of their category to Arts and Humanities. Four other committees developed alternative proposals or substantially changed their requirement. These three proposals are outlined in this section.

In some cases, questions of developing sufficient capacity to enable all students to take requirements in a timely manner have been at the forefront of discussions within the Task Force. Please note that OIR data and tracking of capacity in recent years suggest that approximately 3500 spots per year are needed for each 3-credit requirement.

1. After significant discussion and deliberation, the Social Justice ad hoc committee, citing concerns about both course capacity and faculty preparedness to mount a Social Justice Gen Ed co-requirement, are recommending instead a new Social Justice designation. Faculty could apply for the designation to help students locate these experiences and to demonstrate building capacity over time. A working group will continue to develop criteria for this designation, which will not be included in the General Education curriculum at the present time. *As this was originally proposed as a co-designation, rather than an additional 3 credit requirement, this decision does not alter the total number of credits in the framework.*

2. The Global Citizenship ad hoc committee developed a general description for this category and reduced the original range of pathways, each of which had specific criteria, to main pathways. The committee designed these pathways so that they did not overlap with the new D2 competencies.

3. The Natural Sciences committee was asked to consider whether Mathematics should be included in Natural Sciences. The committee considered this but proposed instead that a separate Mathematics requirement be added. This requirement would include Mathematics courses only (and possibly Statistics) and would not necessarily overlap with most courses currently approved for QR. They also proposed a new Quantitative and

Data Literacy (QD) requirement to replace the existing QR requirement; proposed description and criteria for a QD requirement are included in this report. *Adding the Mathematics requirement would add 3 credits to the overall framework.*

4. The Communication Skills ad hoc committee is proposing that students take a foundational writing and information literacy course (FWIL) and BOTH a second tier writing course AND an Oral Communication course; the January draft framework had students required to take one or the other. *With the proposed addition of a Math course coming from the Natural Sciences ad hoc committee, this change would bring the total Gen Ed framework credits to 48.*

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Arts and Humanities General Education Requirement

Students will take six credits in the Arts and Humanities category. To assist students and faculty in understanding this broad field, and to create opportunity for the various colleges to develop more nuanced requirements, we have subdivided the criteria and objectives into two categories: 1) Arts and Literature and 2) Humanities.

Arts and Literature

Definition:

Arts and literature focus on the understanding, analysis, and production of creative works in a variety of forms, including dance, multimedia, music, theater, visual arts, and writing, among others. While some classes focus on the development of artistic practices within specific forms and genres, others use critical theories to examine the meanings, cultural contexts, and historical development of artistic works. Together they enable students to recognize different artistic traditions, examine individual art works closely using appropriate methods, express their creativity through the rigorous practice of a particular artistic mode, and think critically about artistic works as they relate to social formations, practices, and problems.

Course approval criteria:

Courses must meet at least two of these three criteria:

• Introduce students to one or more forms, genres, and/or traditions of artistic work.

• Allow students to practice the creation of artistic works and/or the analysis of creative works, in each case using methods appropriate to the form.

• Use critical thinking to examine artistic works as they relate to social formations, practices, and/or problems.

Learning Objectives:

Students completing a course fulfilling the Arts and Literature requirement will:

• Learn to *recognize* selected forms, genres, and traditions of artistic work.

• *Practice* the creation of artistic works and/or the analysis of creative works, in each case using methods appropriate to the form.

• Develop critical thinking skills needed to *examine* artistic works as they relate to social formations, practices, and/or problems.

Humanities

Definition:

The humanities involve the study of past and present human thought about the way the world works and how people should behave, exploring big questions with which human cultures have grappled for centuries. The study of the humanities helps students to understand what it means to be human and how the past has shaped the present, building skills in using primary source evidence to construct rational arguments, and expanding capacity to empathize with other people.

Course Approval Criteria:

Courses meeting the Humanities requirement should do at least two of the following three things:

- Expand students' knowledge of cultural constructs and past events and the vocabulary in which humanities scholars describe and characterize them.

- Train students in the critical analysis of primary sources with an emphasis on how they illuminate broader contexts in which they were constructed.

- Develop students' skills in the critical analysis of secondary sources to strengthen an understanding and appreciation of humanistic modes of inquiry, including appropriate research questions and use and citation of evidence.

Although individual courses will be evaluated on their own merits, faculty teaching Humanities courses are most likely to have advanced degrees in history, philosophy, religion, or political science with a focus on political theory.

Learning Objectives:

After completing a course in the Humanities category of the Arts and Humanities General Education requirements, students should be able to do at least three of the following things:

- Recall and apply basic information and scholarly vocabulary about the cultural constructs or past events that are central to the course.

- Read primary sources for basic comprehension of their contents.

- Read secondary sources in the Humanities for basic comprehension of their contents.

- Analyze a primary source via the application of methods taught or practiced in the course.

- Analyze a secondary source in the Humanities via the application of methods taught or practiced in the course.

Social Sciences Gen Ed Requirement

The social sciences focus on how individuals, groups, and institutions affect and interact with each other. Through systematic investigation, social scientists generate explanatory frameworks for understanding human behavior, action, and social practices. Studying social science prepares students to examine past and present social problems; to think critically about individual, local, regional, and global contexts; and to improve societal well-being.

Course approval criteria:

The faculty member must describe how the course accomplishes all of the following, including points where student progress towards the Gen Ed Social Science Learning Outcomes will be assessed:

1. Students *develop an understanding* of how individuals, groups, or institutions affect and interact with each other.

2. Students *explore* <u>theories</u> of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems.

3. Students *learn about* systematic investigation in social science through the <u>methods</u> and <u>processes</u> of research, such as identifying research questions, data collection, analysis, and representation of findings.

Student Learning Outcomes:

In the context of the course topic or field of inquiry, students successfully completing a course fulfilling the Gen Ed Social Science requirement will:

1. Be able to draw on course topics, materials, and activities to *describe* how individuals, groups or institutions affect and interact with each other.
2. Be able to *identify and demonstrate understanding of* theories of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems addressed in the course.
3. *Recognize and evaluate (explain?)* methods and processes of systematic investigation in one or more applied examples of social science research.

Natural Science General Education Requirement

In natural sciences courses, students become familiar with scientific thought, observation, experimentation, and formal hypothesis testing. They develop the skills necessary to make informed judgments about scientific information and arguments related to the natural world. Students also gain the ability to assess the impacts of our expanding scientific knowledge and technology on the diversity of life on Earth, and the quality of life for our own species. All courses provide experiences with the methods of scientific inquiry used to develop new knowledge about the natural world.

N1 courses do not include a lab. N2 courses have a laboratory component.

Both N1 and N2 courses must:
• promote the observation of natural systems as a way of knowing, including the analysis of complex phenomena by isolating and studying their components in the field or under controlled conditions,

• emphasize the process of generating working hypotheses based on both qualitative and quantifiable observations and present the evolution of hypotheses into theories and models that account for observable natural phenomena, and

• illustrate the use of appropriate theories and models to predict change in natural systems over time.

In addition, to satisfy the N2 requirement, courses must:
• offer a total of at least three credits integrating scientific theory and practice, typically combining a lecture component and a lab component,

• have an experiential learning component dedicated to training students in the practice of isolating and studying natural phenomena in the field or under controlled conditions, and

• engage students in, and demonstrate an understanding of, the scientific method through practical and written work.

Mathematics (MA) Requirement

Familiarity with the language of mathematics is crucial for a full appreciation of our world. But the phrase "Math is Everywhere" is true only to the extent that one knows where and how to look, as mathematics has strong links to all of the liberal arts. The courses fulfilling this requirement help guide students in both of these processes. In addition to illustrating the universality and beauty of mathematics, these courses provide a rich framework for constructing and critiquing arguments, as well as give practice in communicating about quantitative topics.

Approval Criteria:

To qualify to fulfill the Mathematics requirement, a course must:

1. be at least 3 credits,
2. satisfy the above Student Learning Outcomes and assess each outcome in at least one assignment (how these outcomes will be addressed and assessed must be detailed in the CourseLeaf submission for the course), and
3. differ from the QD requirement in including philosophical, multidisciplinary and multicultural aspects of logic and proofs.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of any course fulfilling the Mathematics requirement, students should:

1. have an appreciation for the breadth and power of mathematics,
2. have had exposure to the fact that creativity is central to mathematics and that new mathematics is still being created, and
3. have an understanding of the core mathematical concepts in one area of mathematics.

Proposed Quantitative & Data Literacy (QD) Information

Rationale/Preamble

In order to accommodate the addition of a Mathematics requirement in the Liberal Arts Core, as well as ensure that students have attained a level of numeracy appropriate for a UVM graduate, we are proposing the following changes to the existing Quantitative Reasoning (QR) requirement. First: that the requirement be reconfigured as *Quantitative and Data Literacy* (QD) emphasizing the application of quantitative methods across disciplines (other than Mathematics) in the Liberal Arts Core. And, second, that this become a *tagged* requirement within the Liberal Arts Core that students can complete without having to add to the credit burden of the program of General Education.

We see several benefits to this approach. First, the updated category allows greater breadth by integrating data dexterity with numeric literacy. Second, since all students will also be required to complete the Mathematics (MA) requirement, QD-tagged courses can build on this foundation and engage students in the use of those earlier developed skills and knowledge for analyzing data (ideally in the context of the student's discipline). Students will be required to take at least *one* QD-tagged course as part of their coursework satisfying requirements in the Liberal Arts Core – QD-tagged courses can be a part of any area *except* for Mathematics (MA).

Description:

Since data drive many decisions across disciplines and in modern society, and can reveal unique insights in them, it is critical that students have experience manipulating and drawing conclusions from data sets. QR-tagged courses demonstrate and apply quantitative approaches within a disciplinary context, ensuring that students are able to extract meaning from data-rich information and to apply appropriate quantitative analytical tools in assessing that meaning.

Course Approval Criteria:
1. Course must be at least 3 credits.
2. Course must include all three of the above outcomes and assess these outcomes in at least one assignment. How these outcomes will be addressed, as well as assessed, must be detailed in the CourseLeaf submission for the course.
3. A single course cannot be used to satisfy both QD and MA requirements.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of any course receiving the QD designation, students shall be able to:

1. Present data in a variety of ways, including analytical, graphical, and tabular.
2. Interpret, solve problems and draw conclusions from data presented in a number of these ways, and communicate the thought processes involved.
3. Evaluate the value and validity of provided information and determine if the resulting conclusion makes logical sense within the context provided.

Communication Skills General Education Requirement

Students will take nine credits in the Communication Skills category: the current Foundational Writing and Information Literacy requirement, taken in the first year, followed by a Writing and Information Literacy Tier 2 (WIL2) course and an Oral Communication (OC) course. The proposed WIL2 and OC requirements are described more fully below.

Writing and Information Literacy 2 (3 credits)
Brief Description
Additions italicized
This proposal is to change the university's writing and information literacy requirement from one course to two. Currently, students must complete the foundational writing and information literacy (FWIL) requirement, which is ordinarily accomplished in the first year. This second writing and information literacy requirement (WIL2) would provide additional instruction and practice within frameworks of disciplines and fields of study. Courses that fulfill WIL2 will help students gain familiarity and fluency with genres, conventions, and formats typical in a discipline or field as well as develop a deeper understanding of how knowledge is accessed, developed, and shared.
WIL2 courses build on skills and processes introduced in FWIL but refined through the conventions and practices of the field or discipline, including writing appropriately for different purposes, audiences, and contexts; posing and pursuing questions using relevant, reliable, and useful information while integrating and documenting sources correctly; understanding and evaluating ideas and evidence in texts; and developing flexible writing processes, including planning, drafting, revising, and polishing. *Any approved WIL2 course will satisfy the requirement for any student. There is no requirement that WIL2 courses be completed in a student's major, and there is no restriction on the language of instruction for WIL 2 courses.*
Approval criteria
For approval, a course must meet the following criteria:
• include multiple opportunities for students to engage in writing/information literacy activities
> *Writing and information literacy should be tied to the course's outcomes. The application should make clear what role writing and information literacy activities play in the course.*
• include opportunities for students to make use of feedback in developing their work
> *The application should explain how feedback can help students develop learning over time. The intention of this requirement is that writing is not only assigned but also taught. In some courses, assigned drafts and revisions are the mechanism for the application of feedback. In other courses, feedback from one assignment may be applied to a subsequent one. The application should note what feedback mechanisms are embedded in the course and how the instructor will gauge the students' use of feedback.*
• a substantial portion of the semester grade is derived from written assignments
> *The intent of this requirement is that writing and information literacy be a major and meaningful component of the course. The application (and syllabus) should not only note the weight of writing and information literacy activities/assignments in the semester*

grade, but also explain how the work assigned (in volume, in difficulty, in frequency) is substantial.

In addition, the course must address and assess student learning in each of the three objectives (listed below), attending to at least two bullet points for each objective.

Learning Objectives

Changes are italicized for the committee's benefit

Using Disciplinary or Field-Based Frameworks

- Students understand and can apply increasingly complex disciplinary approaches to reading, writing, and working with information
- *Students learn and use the language and methods of a discipline or field*
- *Students engage with debates or conversations that are important in the field*
- *Students demonstrate an ability to communicate to a range of audiences, as appropriate for the course materials and context*

Developing Flexible Writing and Inquiry Processes

- Students become aware that writing and information literacy develop via flexible and iterative processes
- Students develop the capacity to reflect on and improve their processes and performances
- Students evaluate claims, arguments, or recommendations in light of available evidence
- Students evaluate sources for reliability and usefulness

Using Information Ethically

- Students credit others whose work they have consulted or used
- Students have awareness of the processes by which information is generated and accessed in a discipline or field
- Students handle data and source material ethically and with integrity in a discipline or field

Oral Communication and Information Literacy (3 credits)

Brief Description

Oral communication refers to how speakers create and use messages to generate meanings across a wide variety of contexts and cultures. This includes the use of verbal and nonverbal communication practices. The oral communication general education requirement aims to enhance students' ability to speak and listen effectively and ethically. Students will develop effective speaking skills, including crafting messages that are appropriately adapted to purpose, audience, context, and occasion. In addition, students will gain proficiency in informational literacy, including understanding the ethical uses of information and how to find, use, evaluate, and appropriately cite relevant, reliable, and useful information. In addition, students will gain proficiency in practices of effective listening and the critical analysis of oral presentation. Furthermore, competency in oral communication will demonstrate students' abilities to understand and synthesize theories of human communication and how to utilize and apply these theories to crafting effective speaking and listening practices. Courses in this category provide students with an understanding of the form, content, effectiveness, and ethical dimensions of verbal and nonverbal communication; they are not required to be delivered in English.

Approval Criteria
• Students should have at least three opportunities per course to develop and practice oral communication skills through a wide range of possible assignments.
• The course should include faculty supervised and evaluated oral presentations wherein at least 30% of the grade is based on oral presentation and listening.
• Provide as much opportunity as possible for students to practice and improve their oral presentations as well as opportunity to critique oral communication. For approval, the instructor should address how the course size and structure will enable sufficient practice for students to meet the outcomes.
• Emphasize listening as well as presentation skills.
• Emphasize information literacy.

In addition, the course must address and assess student learning in each of the three objectives (listed below), attending to at least two bullet points for each objective.

Learning Objectives

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Students demonstrate appropriate selection of topic and materials;
- Students demonstrate appropriate organization of ideas;
- Students demonstrate appropriate and effective presentation and delivery, including verbal and nonverbal delivery;
- Students demonstrate an ability to adapt to audience, setting, and occasion;
- Students demonstrate effective use of visual aids when appropriate;

Critical Thinking, Listening, and Ethics
- Students demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills to understand the connections between audience, speaker, and occasion;
- Students listen effectively and critically evaluate orally presented information and arguments;
- Students can effectively evaluate, analyze, and critique the ethical dimensions of oral communication.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which cultural diversity influences speech communication.

Using Information Ethically
- Students credit others whose work they have consulted or used in an appropriate format for oral communication occasion;
- Students have awareness of the processes by which information is generated and accessed and handle data and source material ethically and with integrity in the discipline/field and/or topic with which they are engaged;
- Students can effectively evaluate and synthesize materials from diverse sources and integrate multiple perspectives into oral presentations.

Integration and Application of Knowledge in the Major (IA)

Description:

Courses in the Integration and Application of Knowledge in the Major (IA) category are designed to allow students to demonstrate and reflect upon their ability to integrate and apply theoretical and practical knowledge developed in one or more areas of specialization.

Draft approval criteria:

To be approved in this category, courses must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be designed for junior or senior students in a disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or preprofessional area of study, with correspondingly advanced course content and expectations for work consistent with the course level, which must be 100-level or above
- Require students to complete one or more projects that require integration of multiple perspectives, data sources, theories, methodologies, or creative approaches, reflecting students' ability to integrate and apply knowledge gained throughout their educational experience
- Require students to complete a written critical self-assessment or reflection on their development as engaged learners, professionals and/or community members

Global Citizenship Competencies

We live in a world that is more and more interconnected: as human societies are brought into tightening webs of contact with one another, the implications for both human and natural systems are vast and varied. Citizens of the world share common values and needs. These commonalities foster compassion for those with whom we share our planet. Global Citizenship courses help students understand the nature and implications of global interconnectedness; they also help students develop the skills they need to participate effectively in our increasingly global society.

Students can fulfill the global citizenship requirement through one of two pathways:

GC1: Courses that address systems and problems that are global in scope. These courses will help students understand the nature and complexity of global phenomena. They may address artistic, cultural, ecological, economic, human health, political, technological, or other aspects of our increasingly interdependent world. They explore the unique opportunities and problems created by such interconnectedness and interdependence.

GC2: Courses that develop skills necessary to participate effectively as a citizen in local communities and the world at large. To be effective and responsible members of a diverse and interconnected global community, students need to be able to collaboratively effect change, to communicate across cultural boundaries, and to think deeply and creatively about shared responsibilities and injustices. The courses in this pathway are designed to impart at least one of the following core skills: civic engagement, cross-cultural communication, ethical reasoning, language proficiency.

GC1 Course Approval Criteria:

To be considered for meeting the GC1 pathway, a course must include material (lectures, videos, readings, activities) and outputs (student papers, exams, portfolios, etc.) that:

1) Address phenomena that are global in nature; and

2) Address these phenomena through at least one of the following lenses: artistic, cultural, ecological, economic, human health, political, or technological; and

3) Explore the opportunities and problems created by the interconnectedness and interdependence of global phenomena outlined in #1.

GC1 Learning Competencies:

(still under development)

GC1 Course Approval Criteria:

To be considered for meeting the GC2 pathway, a course must include material (lectures, videos, readings, activities) and outputs (student papers, exams, portfolios, etc.) that:

1) Help students develop skills necessary to participate effectively as a citizen in local communities and the world at large in any of the following areas:

      a) civic engagement
      b) cross-cultural communication
      c) ethical reasoning
      d) language proficiency

GC2 Learning Competencies:

(still under development)

Social Justice Ad Hoc Committee Proposal
March 6, 2020

Following extensive discussion about the proposal to include a Social Justice co-requirement in the new UVM General Education Curriculum, the committee proposes that at this time, development of a Social Justice designation, rather than a full Gen Ed requirement. In discussing next steps, the committee prioritized clarifying the goals of courses seeking the designation, clarifying course criteria and learning outcomes, and encouraging faculty to design and pilot courses that exemplify the underlying goals of the designation. This option is proposed as a way of providing time to bring clarity to the proposed SJ designation and address current concerns over course and instructor capacity. The option would provide time for development of new courses and faculty expertise, with the potential to propose a more fully formed and developed SJ requirement at a future time.

The committee identified the following activities as essential to moving forward. These include:

1. Exploration and Clarification

    - Identify authors of the Social Justice Gen Ed proposal and other faculty who would be willing to clarify the purpose and intended outcomes of Social Justice courses.
    - Conduct a review of the literature to identify existing definitions, standards and criteria being used in K-12 and higher education social justice curricula.
    - Utilize information to revise the language included in the current proposal regarding goals of the Social Justice requirement and related course criteria and learning outcomes.

2. Capacity Building and Piloting

    - Identify faculty members interested in adapting their courses to align with the course criteria and learning outcomes identified above.
    - Identify a process for reviewing courses for the proposed SJ designation.
    - Pilot a set of courses and collect feedback from participating students and faculty.
    - Collect data on curriculum capacity to identify the feasibility of implementation as a co-requirement or requirement within the General Education curriculum.

3. Proposal Revision
    - Develop a revised proposal for consideration by the General Education curriculum committee and/or the Faculty Senate, including a capacity analysis, supports in place, and accessibility to students in all degree programs.