
General Education Curriculum

General Education Curriculum Mission Statement: The General Education Curriculum (GEC) of The University of Southern Mississippi is designed to equip its graduates with a broad range of knowledge and skills and the wisdom to deploy them appropriately. In order to build lives of dignity and purpose, University graduates in the twenty-first century will need to

- analyze and evaluate private, public and professional discourse
- assume leadership roles, making use of effective oral and written communication
- engage their local, national and global communities as responsible citizens
- integrate knowledge across subject matters and disciplines
- approach problems with enthusiasm, energized by a spirit of inquiry
- adapt to professional, technological and social change with flexibility and resourcefulness
- make choices, conscious of intellectual, social, and ethical contexts
- see themselves, their communities and their nation in historical context
- assess scientific data and conclusions
- appreciate the arts and their contribution to enlarging the human spirit, and
- collaborate with others to create a humane world

The faculty and administration of The University of Southern Mississippi are committed to providing educational experiences that empower our students not only to meet these challenges, but also to engage the future using the habits of learning acquired during their University education.

General Education Curriculum Oversight

The University of Southern Mississippi Academic Council provides general supervision over the undergraduate academic affairs of the University including the General Education Curriculum. The General Education Committee of the Academic Council is responsible for reviewing and recommending to the Academic Council all courses proposed for inclusion in the University's undergraduate General Education Curriculum. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of all courses included in the General Education Curriculum according to the policy, procedures, and criteria specified in the Academic Council Bylaws. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides administrative support to the Academic Council.

General Education Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes: The General Education Curriculum is structured for students to attain specific learning outcomes organized around five broad principles.

Essential Skills

- 1a. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop and focus on one topic in writing assignments and present ideas in an organized, logical and coherent form.
- 1b. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop and focus on one topic in speaking assignments and present ideas in an organized, logical and coherent form
- 1c. Students will demonstrate the ability to use Standard English grammar, punctuation, spelling and usage.
- 2a. Students shall model real-world situations with linear, quadratic, exponential or logarithmic functions and solve equations related to these situations.
- 2b. Students will demonstrate fundamental math skills.
- 2c. Students will demonstrate skill in electronic collaboration.
- 2d. Students will demonstrate the ability to create structured electronic documents.
- 2e. Students will demonstrate the ability to do online research and evaluation.
- 2f. Students will demonstrate competency in the operation of a computer.

Acquisition and Integration of Knowledge

- 3a. Students will have a good understanding of the scientific method.
- 3b. Students will have good knowledge of the basic concepts of at least one science discipline.
- 3c. Students will have a good understanding of the current areas of concerns or emphasis within at least one science discipline.
- 3d. Students will be able to interpret scientific data and reach a plausible conclusion.
- 3e. Students will have a good understanding of the techniques used in science.
- 4a. Students will demonstrate a basic awareness of current issues and concerns.
- 4b. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the manner societies address or develop solutions to current issues and concerns.
- 5a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the development of at least one society.
- 5b. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between societies.

- 6a. Students will demonstrate an understanding that social institutions, such as the family, religion, education and formal organizations are closely related to each other and are evidence of the integration of our complex global social systems.
- 6b. Students will demonstrate an understanding that governments and economics are closely related to each other and are evidence of the integration of our complex global social system.
- 7a. Students will demonstrate the ability to connect ideas in a coherent essay.
- 7b. Students will demonstrate the ability to connect course content to other disciplines and/or to real world situations.

Aesthetic Understanding

- 8a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the influence of art, music, literature, theatre or dance on culture.
- 8b. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for art, music, literature, theatre, and/or dance.

Development of Logical and Critical Thinking

- 9a. Students will demonstrate the ability to write an analytical essay.
- 9b. Students will demonstrate the ability to find and use (and cite) relevant sources.
- 9c. Students will be able to analyze the components of an argument.

Responsibility, Self and Society

- 10a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of at least one historical and one contemporary theory of human behavior and their application to "real world" problems.
- 10b. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical behavior in social contexts throughout the understanding and application of academic honesty and the ethical codes and guidelines relevant to two or more disciplines.
- 11a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of at least two theories of morality or moral development, and their application to "real world" situations.
- 11b. Students will demonstrate an understanding of at least two theories of group or social processes, and the role they play in ethics, morality or justice.
- 12a. Students will explain implications of diversity among individuals.
- 12b. Students will be able to explain the implications of familial, sexual or religious diversity among individuals.
- 13a. Students will be able to explain the implications of political diversity within or among social systems.
- 13b. Students will be able to explain the implications of familial, sexual or religious diversity within or among social systems.
- 14a. Students will be able to discuss (in speaking or writing) major developments in world history.
- 14b. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the literary and creative contributions of world cultures.

General Education Curriculum Student Learning Outcome Assessment

All GEC courses are required to be assessed based on the GEC student learning outcomes. An annual GEC assessment report must be submitted by the academic unit. Additionally, selected students may participate in the administration of a national, standardized General Education Assessment Exam.

Writing and Speaking in the General Education Curriculum

Fluency in communication is the hallmark of an educated person. Therefore, the General Education Curriculum emphasizes the development of college-level communication skills of all students.

Writing. Courses in the first five GEC categories, with the exception of Mathematics, require students to write a minimum of 2500 words. In addition, English 102 requires students to write at least 5000 words. Each degree plan specifies: (1) an upper-level course that is writing intensive and (2) a Capstone. In each of these courses, students are required to write a minimum of 5000 words.

Speaking. Each degree plan specifies: (1) an Oral Communication course and (2) a Capstone. At least one of these courses requires the successful completion of a minimum of two graded speeches. The other course may substitute two appropriate graded oral communication equivalents.

Writing and Speaking Resources for Students and Faculty. The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to providing a learning environment that offers enhanced support for strengthening speaking and writing skills. Students have access to individualized assistance with writing and speaking assignments for any course through the University's Writing Center and Speaking Center on both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses. The centers offer free, personalized assistance at any stage of the process with the goal of helping students become more effective writers and speakers. The Speaking Center also includes a presentation rehearsal studio with the tools and space to rehearse, record, and view a presentation. Faculty members have the opportunity to participate in a faculty development seminar designed to enhance student learning outcomes in oral and written communication across the curriculum. Faculty resources for incorporating writing and speaking assignments are also available through the centers.

General Education Curriculum Syllabi

Syllabi of courses in the General Education Curriculum must include a statement or description of: (a) GEC Student Learning Outcomes addressed in the course; (b) course content and related activities; (c) student reading and writing requirements, where appropriate; (d) instructional methods and resources; and (e) student performance standards (including rubric if applicable).

Final Exams or Projects in the General Education Curriculum

All courses in the first five General Education Curriculum categories require a significant final project or proctored final examination.

General Education Curriculum in the Degree Programs

Students should check the degree plan for their major for specific courses that satisfy the GEC requirements.

GEC 01. Written Communication (6 hours)

Students complete:

- ENG 101: English 101 (Composition 1) - taken the first semester at the University
- ENG 102: English 102 (Composition 2) - taken the semester immediately following
ENG 101

ACT Requirement. Students scoring 17 or above on the English language portion of the ACT must enroll in English 101 during their first semester at the university. Students scoring 16 or below on the English language portion of the ACT must complete an appropriate developmental course or courses and immediately thereafter enroll in English 101. In the semester immediately following completion of English 101, students must enroll in English 102.

GEC 02. Basic Science and Mathematics (11 hours minimum)

Students complete a Science Requirement and a Mathematics Requirement.

Science (8 hours minimum)

Students complete two lecture courses with the co-requisite laboratories from the following list:

- AST 111/AST 111L: Astronomy 111/L (General Astronomy I with lab)
- AST 112/AST 112L: Astronomy 112/L (General Astronomy II with lab)
- BSC 103/BSC 103L: Biology 103/L (Biology and Society with lab) ◇
- BSC 110/BSC 110L: Biology 110/L (Principles of Biology I with lab) ◇
- BSC 111/BSC 111L: Biology 111/L (Principles of Biology II with lab) ◇
- BSC 250/BSC 250L: Biology 250/L (Anatomy and Physiology I with lab)
- BSC 251/BSC 251L: Biology 251/L (Anatomy and Physiology II with lab)
- CHE 104/CHE 104L: Chemistry 104/L (Chemistry in our Environment with lab)
- CHE 106/CHE 106L: Chemistry 106/L (General Chemistry I with lab)
- CHE 107/CHE 107L: Chemistry 107/L (General Chemistry II with lab)
- GHY 104/GHY 104L: Geography 104/L (Weather and Climate with lab) ◇◇
- GHY 105/GHY 105L: Geography 105/L (Landforms, Hydrology, Biogeography with lab) ◇◇
- GLY 101/GLY 101L: Geology 101/L (Physical Geology with lab)
- GLY 103/GLY 103L: Geology 103/L (Historical Geology with lab)
- MAR 151/MAR 151L: Marine Science 151/L (Introduction to Ocean Science with lab)
- PHY 111/PHY 111L: Physics 111/L (General Physics [Algebra-based] I with lab)
- PHY 112/PHY 112L: Physics 112/L (General Physics [Algebra-based] II with lab)
- PHY 201/PHY 201L: Physics 201/L (General Physics [Calculus-based] I with lab) – 5 hours total
- PHY 202/PHY 202L: Physics 202/L (General Physics [Calculus-based] II with lab) – 5 hours total
- PSC 190/PSC 190L: Polymer Science 190/L (Living in a Material World with lab)

◇ Biology 103/L cannot be taken in combination with Biology 110/L or Biology 111/L to meet the GEC Science Requirement.

◇◇ Students who take Geography 104/L or Geography 105/L to fulfill the GEC Science Requirement may not take Geography 101 to fulfill the Social Science Requirement.

Mathematics (3 hours)

Students complete:

MAT 101: Mathematics 101 (College Algebra) or higher-numbered mathematics course

ACT Recommendation. Students with an ACT Mathematics subtest score of 17, 18, or 19 are strongly encouraged to take Mathematics 99 (Intermediate Algebra) before enrolling in Mathematics 101 (College Algebra).

GEC 03. Global History and Culture (12 hours)

Students complete a Social Sciences Requirement and a Humanities Requirement.

Social Sciences (3 hours)

Students complete one course:

ANT 101: Anthropology 101 (The Human Experience)

GHY 101: Geography 101 (World Regional Geography) ◇◇

SOC 101: Sociology 101 (Understanding Society)

Humanities (9 hours)

Students complete:

ENG 203: English 203 (Literatures of the World)

Students complete two courses; one History course required:

HIS 101: History 101 (World Civilizations I)

HIS 102: History 102 (World Civilizations II)

PHI 151: Philosophy 151 (Introduction to Philosophy)

REL 131: Religion 131 (Comparative Religion)

◇◇ Students who take Geography 101 to fulfill the social science requirement may not fulfill their Science requirement by taking Geography 104/104L or Geography 105/105L.

GEC 04. Aesthetic Values (3 hours)

Students complete one course:

ART 130: Art 130 (The Art Experience)

DAN 130: Dance 130 (Dance Appreciation)

MUS 365: Music 365 (Enjoyment of Music)

THE 100: Theater 100 (Theatrical Expressions)

GEC 05. Decision Making and Responsibility (3 hours)

Students complete one course:

COH 100: College of Health 100 (Concepts of Wellness)

ECO 101: Economics 101 (Basic Economics)

PHI 171: Philosophy 171 (Ethics and Good Living)

PS 101: Political Science 101 (American Government)

PSY 110: Psychology 110 (General Psychology)

GEC 06. Computer Competency Requirement

Each degree plan specifies a GEC Computer Competency course or exam.

GEC 07. Writing-Intensive Requirement (Prerequisite: ENG 101 and ENG 102)

Each degree plan specifies an upper-level GEC Writing-Intensive course. Departments may elect to develop a program-specific writing-intensive course within major courses or have students take an appropriate writing-intensive course in another department. GEC writing-intensive courses are defined as those that, while focusing on a specific subject matter (with corresponding readings and discussions), encourage students to think critically and creatively, outline a subject matter or theme, and produce drafts. In writing-intensive courses, students write a minimum of 5,000 words (approximately 20 pages of double-spaced typed text) in discipline-specific papers and assignments. Class enrollment is capped at 24.

GEC 08. Oral Communication Requirement

Each degree plan specifies a GEC Oral Communication course. Departments may elect to develop a program-specific oral communication course within major courses or have students take an appropriate oral communication course in another department. GEC oral communication courses are defined as those that require students to earn satisfactory grades for two or more oral presentations or equivalents. The oral communication components of these courses should teach rhetorical reasoning, audience adaptation, professionalism, and presentation skills including clarity of expression, ideas and voice, as well as prepare students to be critical consumers of public discourse.

GEC 09. Capstone Requirement

Each degree plan identifies a program-specific communication-intensive GEC Capstone. The Capstone must be taken the senior year and must meet the written and oral communication requirements outlined below. The program utilizes the Capstone as a means of assessing student achievement of the program's student learning outcomes. To receive credit for the Capstone, students must receive a grade of C or better. Class enrollment is capped at 24.

Capstone written and oral communication requirements:

The writing component of the Capstone requires students to write a minimum of 5,000 words (approximately 20 pages of double-spaced typed text) in discipline-specific papers and assignments. The written communication component should teach students to focus on a specific subject matter (with corresponding readings and discussions), encourage students to think critically and creatively, outline a subject matter or theme, and produce drafts.

The oral communication component of the Capstone requires the successful completion of a minimum of two graded speeches or two appropriate graded oral communication equivalents. The oral communication component should teach rhetorical reasoning, audience adaptation, professionalism and presentation skills including clarity of expression, ideas and voice, as well as prepare students to be critical consumers of public discourse.

Alternative Credit for the General Education Curriculum

A student may receive credits for a GEC course if he or she is able to demonstrate mastery of the course material. Credit can be received for any GEC course in one of the following three ways: the student 1) completes an equivalent course with an acceptable score through the College Entrance Examinations Board's Advanced Placement Testing Program before entering The University of Southern Mississippi; 2) passes an appropriate CLEP examination or 3) passes a departmental challenge examination on the relevant course material. The detailed procedures and regulations regarding these three methods of obtaining up to 30 hours credit toward a degree at The University of Southern Mississippi are described in the General Academic Information section of this *Bulletin*.

Additional requests for exemptions and substitutions for the requirements of the General Education Curriculum should be addressed to the Provost.

Individual student requests are handled in the following manner:

1. The student's department (advisor, then chair/director) sign and then forward the request to the dean of their major.
2. The major dean then forwards the request to the accepting department.
3. The accepting department forwards the request to the dean of the accepting major.
4. The request is then forwarded to the Provost.