

OVERVIEW OF OAKLAND UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION

The major goals of Oakland University's General Education program are to introduce students to a broad base of knowledge and to develop their analytical and evaluative skills, creating a solid foundation for productive and fulfilling lives of leadership, innovation and service. A well-educated person is not a narrow specialist, and the breadth of knowledge acquired through general education cannot be found in any single major. Through its three-part structure of Foundations, Explorations, and Integration, the General Education program complements the major to increase the student's flexibility and options upon graduation.

- The **FOUNDATION** areas that all students must master are *Writing Foundations and Formal Reasoning*. These courses develop skills and understanding that are invaluable for all of the student's subsequent education.
- The **EXPLORATION** areas that students must take include: *Arts, Foreign Language and Culture, Literature, Global Perspectives, Natural Science and Technology, Social Science and Western Civilization*. In addition to fundamental abilities, a well-educated person should also have a critical appreciation of the ways we gain knowledge and an understanding of the universe, of society, and of humankind that these courses develop.
- The **INTEGRATION** areas that students must master include: *Knowledge Applications and the Capstone*. For the well-educated person, the knowledge and capacities of the various disciplines and majors do not exist in isolation but form an integrated whole. The Integration Areas allow students to synthesize their knowledge, to see connections among the various disciplines and to apply their knowledge to real world problems. This integrated knowledge forms the basis for students to continue to learn and grow throughout their lives and prepares them for productive lives of service and leadership.

Oakland University's General Education program also helps students develop more advanced writing skills, a breadth in understanding diversity issues in the United States, and a continuous education in the range of intellectual capacities that cut across all areas and disciplines.

- Through two **WRITING INTENSIVE** courses, students gain a depth in both general and discipline-specific writing abilities. *Writing Intensive in General Education* and *Writing Intensive in the Major* may be found in courses that also satisfy the Explorations and Integration areas.
- Oakland University is also committed to ensuring that students develop an understanding of the history, strengths and the challenges of the diversity found across the United States. Through **U.S. DIVERSITY** courses students develop an understanding of the history, strengths, and the challenges of the diversity found across the United States. U.S. diversity courses may also satisfy other areas within the General Education structure.

A sound education also requires capacities that cut across all of these areas, and general education courses are designed to enhance students' abilities in critical thinking, information literacy, effective communication and social awareness.

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment is a valuable process for determining whether general education is meeting its program goals. From the results of assessment, important information is gained about how students benefit from general education and how program effectiveness can continue to be improved.

The General Education Committee is responsible for the assessment of OU's General Education program. Department chairs are responsible for providing information regarding general education courses in their departments.

OU will continue its triennial review cycle for general education. OU's General Education program emphasizes ten knowledge areas plus U.S. diversity and a capstone. Throughout the undergraduate course of study, a student will be taught skills and mentored in experiences to develop these competencies. Faculty in each academic unit will define these competencies in terms of measurable objectives that can be assessed at the completion of the undergraduate experience. Any general education program must be developed in partnership with a plan to measure its effectiveness.

Each year, four courses in four of these areas will undergo review. In addition to the current review of syllabi, the new triennial review will include assessment of student performance on the general education learning outcomes and indirect assessment of the cross-cutting capacities (graduating senior survey). For more information about the assessment process and program review, see the Assessment abstract from the Proposal for the Renewal of General Education at Oakland University.

To ensure continuous quality of the general education curriculum a complete program review will be conducted in 2009 (four years after inception) and every seven years thereafter (after two triennial cycles). The program review will look at course assessments and identify other areas of the program that could be improved, such as facilities, staffing, ratio of full to part-time faculty, class size, relationship to other programs, etc.

GENERAL EDUCATION AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY (40 Credits for FTIAC students)

General Education	Areas	Requirement	Learning Objectives
Foundations Knowledge			
	Writing	1 course equivalent to RHT 160. Including an intensive writing component in one general education course outside of RHT 150-160 and an intensive writing component in one course in the major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of the elements, writing processes and organizing strategies for creating analytical and expository prose</i> ➤ <i>effective rhetorical strategies appropriate to the topic, audience, context and purpose</i>
	Formal Reasoning	1 course in Mathematics, Statistics, Logic, Linguistics, or Computer Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of one or more formal reasoning systems such as computer programming, mathematics, statistics, linguistics or logic</i> ➤ <i>application of formal reasoning to read, understand, model and solve problems across a variety of applications</i>
Exploration Knowledge			
	Arts	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of cultural or historic artistic traditions in visual, auditory, movement, theatrical or cinematic art</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of the role of art as critical commentary on society and as an aesthetic expression of experience</i>
	Foreign Language & Culture	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of a foreign language and culture</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of linguistic and cultural diversity and the contributions of such diversity to the global society</i>
	Global Perspective	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of the environments, political systems, economies, societies and religions of one or more regions outside the United States and awareness of the transnational flow of goods, peoples, ideas and values</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of the role that different cultural heritages, past and present, play in forming values in another part of the world, enabling the student to function within a more global context</i>
	Literature		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of how literature is an expression of culture</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of literary form</i> ➤
	Natural Science & Technology	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of major concepts from natural science or technology, including developing and testing of hypotheses; drawing conclusions; and reporting of findings and some laboratory experience or an effective substitute</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>how to evaluate sources of information in science or technology</i>
	Social Science	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of concepts, methods and theories designed to enhance understanding of human behavior and/or societies</i> ➤ <i>application of concepts and theories to problems involving individuals, institutions, or nations</i>
	Western Civilization	1 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>knowledge of the historical events and/or philosophical ideas of European or American culture</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of how Western ideas or institutions have evolved over time</i>
Integration Knowledge			
	Knowledge Applications	1 course outside major rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>how knowledge in a field outside of the student's major can be evaluated and applied to solve problems across a range of applications</i> ➤ <i>knowledge of the personal, professional, ethical, and societal implications of these applications</i>
	Capstone	A capstone course in the major or outside of the major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>appropriate uses of a variety of methods of inquiry and a recognition of ethical considerations that arise</i> ➤ <i>the ability to integrate the knowledge learned in general education and its relevance to the student's life and career</i>

In addition at least one course that a student takes at OU must include diversity (see definition). Diversity courses can double count for other general education areas. General education courses are required to have at least one cross cutting capacity [critical thinking, information literacy, effective communication or social awareness (see definitions)] and students should have all cross cutting capacities from the sum of their general education courses.