

**Proposed General Education (GE) Modifications  
College of Letters and Science**

**Approved by the College Faculty Executive Committee on May 9, 2001**

**Rationale for GE Modifications**

Five reasons compel the GE Governance Committee to propose modifying the general education requirements in the College of Letters and Science at UCLA. They are as follow:

1. *Simplification of GE Requirements*

The current general education curriculum is a vast, accumulated, and overly complex set of departmental offerings that span all four divisions of the College. Students and many faculty members find the current requirements confusing, lacking in coherence, and without clear intellectual justification.

2. *Reduction in the Number of GE Units*

Forty-five percent of the units that students in the College must complete in order to earn an undergraduate degree fall within the area of general education (see Table 1). These GE-mandated courses, in tandem with an increasing number of pre-major, major, minor, and other specialized area course units, are increasing the time students take to complete their degree programs. A modest reduction in the College's general education requirements would reduce our students' time to degree and allow more course work in the area of minors, pre-majors, majors, and/or electives.

3. *More Intensive General Education Courses*

This proposal balances the reduction in the College's GE requirements with an increase in the value of most departmental GE courses from four to five units. Such an increase in student workload per course offers departments the opportunity to review and redesign their GE offerings to represent their disciplines more effectively and provide our students with more challenging intellectual experiences.

4. *Departmental Evaluation and Review of Undergraduate Education Courses*

These proposed modifications in the College's general education requirements provide departments with the opportunity to coordinate a re-evaluation of their GE offerings with a comprehensive re-evaluation of their entire undergraduate program.

5. *Opportunity to Strengthen General Education Counseling and Monitoring*

General education courses are primarily intended to provide first and second year students with a foundation and breath of knowledge and skills that will prepare them for more demanding intellectual experiences in upper division courses. The proposed reconsideration of GE offerings affords the College an opportunity to consider more effective ways of monitoring GE courses and of counseling and monitoring students in fulfilling the general education portion of their curriculum.

*earlier  
completion*

## **Proposal to Modify General Education Requirements**

The following proposal provides a framework for College GE requirements that are simpler, fewer in number, and more coherent. Moreover, such modifications should create improved educational experiences by exposing students to a wide and monitored range of best practices in teaching.

College unit requirements in writing, quantitative reasoning, and foreign language would remain unchanged and constitute 26 units of the College's general education curriculum. Additionally, students will be required to complete courses in each of the foundation areas as described below. This modification in the College GE curriculum will reduce the number of required general education courses from 14 with a unit value of 56 to 10 with a unit value of 48.

### ***Foundations of the Arts and Humanities (3 courses, 15 units)***

The aim of courses in this area is to provide students with the perspectives and intellectual skills necessary to comprehend and think critically about our situation in the world as human beings. In particular, these courses provide students with the basic means to appreciate and evaluate the ongoing efforts of humans to explain, translate, and transform our experiences of the world through such media as language, literature, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances. These courses will introduce students to the historical development and fundamental intellectual and ethical issues associated with the arts and humanities and may also investigate the complex relations between artistic and humanistic expression and other facets of society and culture.

Students may satisfy this area by taking one course in each of the following subgroups:

*Literary and Cultural Analysis*  
*Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis*  
*Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice*

### ***Foundations of Society and Culture (3 courses, 15 units)***

The aim of courses in this area is to introduce students to the ways in which humans organize, structure, rationalize, and govern their societies over time. These courses focus on a particular historical question, societal problem, or topic of political and economic concern in an effort to demonstrate to students how issues are objectified for study, how data is collected and analyzed, and how new understandings of social phenomena are achieved and evaluated.

Students may satisfy this area by taking three courses from the following subgroups (students must take one course in each of these subgroups, with the third coming from either area):

*Historical Analysis*  
*Social Analysis*

***Foundations of Scientific Inquiry (4 courses, 18 units)***

The aim of courses in this area is to ensure that students gain a fundamental understanding of how scientists formulate and answer questions about the operation of both the physical and biological world. These courses also deal with some of the most important issues, developments, and methodologies in contemporary science, addressing such topics as the origin of the universe, environmental degradation, and the decoding of the human genome. Through lectures, laboratory experiences, writing, and intensive discussions students consider the important roles played by the laws of physics and chemistry in society, biology, earth and environmental sciences, and astrophysics and cosmology.

Students may satisfy this area by taking four courses from the following subgroups (two courses in the Life Sciences and two in the Physical Sciences):

*Life Sciences*

*Physical Sciences*

One of the two courses in each subgroup must have a lab/demonstration/Writing II component valued at 5 units. The other two courses may be 4 unit courses without a lab/demonstration/Writing II component. AP credit cannot be used to fulfill the GE science requirements in the College of Letters and Science.

## **Best Practices in General Education**

General education courses should strengthen skills in writing, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking by providing students at an early stage in their academic career with options that expose them to such best practices in teaching as seminars, linked courses, experiential education, inquiry-based learning, and interdisciplinary study. In order to foster best practices in lower division teaching at UCLA, one of the ten required GE courses in the College must be either:

- A lower division seminar approved for general education credit, or
- A second Writing II course, or
- Five units of Student Research Program credit (Honors Course 99)

## **Some Rules of the Game**

The following are some additional points of clarification with regard to the proposed modifications of general education requirements:

- General education courses may be listed in more than one of the proposed GE foundation areas.
- Pre-major and pre-minor courses approved for GE credit may be used to satisfy the requirements in an appropriate foundation area.
- Courses taught in the GE Cluster Program will be assigned credit in the appropriate foundation areas. A student may also satisfy the GE seminar requirement by completing a GE cluster.
- Requirements in a GE foundation area may be satisfied by a student-designed College-approved sequence of three-four courses.

## **General Education Oversight**

In keeping with its charge to “oversee the systematic review, evaluation, and improvement of general education courses and programs on campus,” the General Education Governance Committee will work with the Undergraduate Council, the College Faculty Executive Committee, and the College’s departments to ensure that all general education offerings are in compliance with the modifications outlined in this proposal. Towards that end, the General Education Governance Committee will ask the departments of the College of Letters and Science to review their undergraduate curriculum in order to provide the committee with the following information:

- Department rationale for courses that will carry GE credit.
- Justification for increasing the value of these departmental GE courses from 4 to 5 units.
- Appropriate foundational area(s) assignment of the proposed GE courses.

These proposed modifications do not mandate a reduction in the courses that departments offer for GE credit. Nevertheless, the College does anticipate that departments will reduce the number of courses that they now offer for general education credit in light of the increase in workload and resources necessary to augment the unit value of these courses.

**Table 1. Comparison of Current and Proposed GE Requirements**

**A. College-wide Requirements: Current College unit requirements in writing, quantitative reasoning, and foreign language would remain unchanged and constitute 26 units of UCLA's general education curriculum.**

**B. Proposed Changes in College GE Requirements:**

	<b>Current</b> (1 course = 4 units)	<b>Proposed</b>
Humanities = Foundations of the Arts and Humanities	Literature (1 course) <sup>1</sup> Philosophy Language & Linguistics Culture & Civilization The Arts	Literary and Cultural Analysis (1 course) Philosophical and Linguistic Analysis (1 course) Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice (1 course) (1 course = 5 units)
	<b>Total units = 16 (4 courses)</b>	<b>Total units = 15 (3 courses)</b>
Social Science = Foundations of Society and Culture	Social Analysis (2 courses) Historical Analysis (2 courses)	Social Analysis (1 course) Historical Analysis (1 course) <i>3<sup>rd</sup> course from either subgroup</i> (1 course = 5 units)
	<b>Total units = 16 (4 courses)</b>	<b>Total units = 15 (3 courses)</b>
Physical Sciences & Life Sciences = Foundations of Scientific Inquiry	3 courses <sup>2</sup>  3 courses <sup>3</sup>	Physical Sciences (2 courses) Life Sciences (2 courses) (One 5-unit course in each area must have a lab/demonstration/writing II component. Each of the other 2 may be 4 units)
	<b>Total units = 24 (6 courses)</b>	<b>Total units = 18 (4 courses)</b>
<b>Total GE units</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Total units for the College GE requirements</b>	A. 26 Total units from Writing, Quantitative Reasoning, and Foreign Language requirements + B. 56 Total GE units = <b>82 (45% of 180 units)</b>	A. 26 Total units from Writing, Quantitative Reasoning, and Foreign Language requirements + B. 48 Total GE units = <b>74 (41% of 180 units)</b>

<sup>1</sup> One course in literature is required and the other three courses must be distributed among the four other areas, with no more than two courses in any one area. Page 5

<sup>2</sup> Includes complementary course sequence and laboratory/demonstration requirement.

<sup>3</sup> Includes laboratory/demonstration requirement.