

Binghamton University General Education Implementation Task Force

Spring 2022

As a result of the SUNY Board of Trustees [adopting a revised General Education curriculum](#) for required implementation by all SUNY campuses beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, Binghamton University established a task force to review the existing Binghamton University general education curriculum and to develop a recommended plan for implementing the new SUNY curriculum.

The task force was jointly appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) and Provost Donald Nieman and consisted of faculty Megan Benson, David Clark, Les Lander, Donald Loewen (co-chair), Sara Reiter (co-chair), Alexa Silva, Diane Sommerville and John Starks, with Asst. Dir. for Undergraduate Education Paul Gorelik also participating.

The charge from the Faculty Senate instructed the task force:

1. To compile a plan for the implementation of SUNY's revised General Education Guidelines.
2. To appoint Working Groups, where applicable, to propose plans for specific aspects of General Education implementation, soliciting wide consultation among faculty.
3. To ensure that the proposed implementation plan meets all SUNY requirements, ensure that the implementation plan does not create additional course requirements for students, and to propose an implementation plan that is achievable without major reallocation of resources.
4. To inform the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUC) and FSEC about the progress of the implementation plan and of the Working Groups.
5. To provide the FSEC with a finalized plan for approval.

The task force was instructed to follow these guiding principles:

- The implementation plan should not result in the requirement of additional General Education courses.
- Where SUNY's new general education requirements do not affect requirements in specific areas of Binghamton's general education program, they will not be revised by this implementation plan.
- Working groups will be created for aspects of Gen Ed implementation that entail substantive changes to Gen Ed requirements

The task force should solicit the faculty for membership in working groups and seek to ensure representation of relevant stakeholders. Each working group should seek broad input into their deliberations.

The task force met several times in February. One meeting included technical experts to determine what technical constraints might impact implementation decisions; the resulting discussion clarified that decisions could focus on curricular issues since it was unlikely that technical constraints would affect decisions or implementation. After that, the task force identified the need for four working groups:

- Aesthetics
- Humanities
- Diversity: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice

- Critical Thinking and Information Literacy

The task force then scheduled two open town hall meetings (March 22, 2022 and March 25, 2022) for the entire campus to be informed about the process and to invite volunteers to participate in the working groups. The town hall meetings were advertised in Dateline and faculty meetings wherever possible. Separately, working group leaders circulated broad invitations for participation in the working group meetings.

Refer to the Gen Ed ComparisonTable document for comparisons of current and future General Education categories and note where Binghamton University's current requirements are local campus requirements rather than categories within the SUNY curriculum.

In following the FSEC's charge, the task force recommends the following and notes that for all categories the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) will be revised to align with the new SUNY SLOs where necessary:

1. Aesthetics

- Adopt the new SUNY SLOs as written. Adopt implementation guidance developed by the Arts departments.

2. Communication

- Maintain the existing pattern of courses for Communication (Written and Oral). Binghamton's existing C, O and J categories would remain.
- The SLOs may be split up between Written and Oral so that not all are required in each category. The UCC and General Education Task Force will coordinate this potential division and implementation.

3. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy

Both of these are currently represented in SUNY's General Education curriculum but Binghamton University does not separately apply them to courses or track student completion of courses that meet these SLOs. The working group recommends the following approach to adoption and implementation:

- The categories should be applied to courses independently, not required/embedded universally in a particular existing Gen Ed category.
 - The categories can be added independently or jointly, depending on the course.
 - Since these can be added to courses which already meet one or more General Education categories, a student would not need to take extra courses to fulfill the requirement. For example, a course could have H, J, CT and IL and be applied to meet requirements in each category.
 - The task force recommends that initially these tags only be added to courses that have fulfilled other General Education categories; we anticipate that many existing courses that already satisfy specific categories will add these skills. Standalone tags may be added to other courses when the UCC has more experience with the CT and IL tag approval and assessment process.

- That we provide curricular support to allow “scaffolding” of these two competencies so that there is added value for students who encounter them at lower-division levels and upper-division levels. Libraries faculty are prepared to help with this for information literacy; they can also help with assessment rubrics.
- When requesting a designation, instructors should indicate the method that will be used to assess the SLOs.
- Workshops will be needed to help instructors prepare to incorporate and assess the specific learning outcomes; initial Information Literacy workshops are being held in April 2022 and more will be offered in Fall 2023.

4. Foreign Language

- Maintain existing campus language requirements
- The task force recommends that we rename the category to World Languages.

5. Global Interdependencies:

- No change

6. Humanities

- Adopt the new SUNY SLOs as written. This will provide greater latitude for course development in this category.
- The working group recommended that some further support be provided to instructors around the concept of “methods.”
- The working group recommends that our guidance to instructors state that we adopt a broad interpretation of the term “artifacts” in the learning outcomes.
- Separately, a faculty group will be convened to pursue a common approach to including language courses in this category where appropriate.

7. Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)

- No significant change; it remains to be determined whether some of the logic courses that meet the current SLOs will meet the new SLOs.

8. Natural Sciences (Laboratory Sciences)

- Retain our requirement for laboratory science (at least 10 Laboratories).

9. “Pluralism in the United States” changes to “Diversity: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice”

- The existing Binghamton University category (“Pluralism in the United States”) will be replaced by the new SUNY category “Diversity: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice.” Previously, SUNY’s curriculum did not have a related category.
- The task force recommends that we use “D” as the new Banner tag for this category, and include the full name in our narrative descriptions and guidance.

- The task force recommends the adoption of the SUNY SLO's as written, with the following additional guidance:
 - In addition to the required SLOs, we encourage instructors to explore other aspects of diversity in their courses, including categories identified in our "Pluralism" requirement, such as Disability status, Gender and gender identity, Immigrant status/issues, Language and language identity, Religious/spiritual identities, Sexual orientations,
 - The task force recommends that our guidance to instructors state that "race, class, and gender" will be broadly construed.
 - Instructors are encouraged to include U.S.-based topics in their courses.
- Note: Currently, students who have not satisfied our U.S. History requirement prior to matriculation take a specialized "USP" course that covers Binghamton's U.S. History learning outcomes as well as the "Pluralism in the United States" learning outcomes. We recommend continuing the U.S. History requirement for students who have not scored above an 84 of the Regents exam in U.S. History (or the equivalent)- i.e. add Binghamton's U.S. History learning outcomes to the new D learning outcomes so that students can continue to use one specialized USD course to meet both sets of learning outcomes.

10. U.S. History

- The task force recommends that the current U.S. History SLOs (see below) should be reviewed in light of the changes to other curricular modifications in this revision.

11. Social Sciences

- No change

12. Wellness and Physical Activity

- No change.

Future work

Additional details concerning implementation will need to be addressed by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

- Mechanisms will need to be developed to determine whether a course that meets current SLOs will meet revised SLOs, if appropriate.
- The UUCC will need to ensure continuity and course availability for returning students while providing courses for new students in Fall 2023.
- A more robust assessment process will need to be implemented. The task force recommends that applications for a General Education category include both a commitment to participate in assessment of the SLOs and a description of the method that will be used to assess them. The UUCC is exploring the use of Brightspace to assist instructors with streamlined opportunities to fulfill these assessment responsibilities.

- Faculty who teach world languages will be convened and asked to create a common approach in determining which language courses will meet the Humanities SLOs.
- A faculty group will be convened to review the current U.S. History SLOs.
- Instructors should acknowledge their obligation to participate in assessing SLOs when they teach these courses.

NEW BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (FALL 2023)***SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS******Communication – Written and Oral***

Students will

- research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details;
- demonstrate coherent college-level communication (written and oral) that informs, persuades, or otherwise engages with an audience;
- evaluate communication for substance, bias, and intended effect; and
- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve written and oral communication.

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Students will

- describe the historical and contemporary societal factors that shape the development of individual and group identity involving race, class, and gender;
- analyze the role that complex networks of social structures and systems play in the creation and perpetuation of the dynamics of power, privilege, oppression, and opportunity; and
- apply the principles of rights, access, equity, and autonomous participation to past, current, or future social justice action.

Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)

Students will demonstrate mathematical skills and quantitative reasoning, including the ability to

- interpret and draw inferences from appropriate mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, or schematics;
- represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, or verbally as appropriate; and
- employ quantitative methods such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, or statistics to solve problems.

Laboratory Science (SUNY Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning))

Students will demonstrate scientific reasoning applied to the natural world, including

- an understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of data analysis or mathematical modeling; and
- application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

Humanities

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities; and
- recognize and analyze nuance and complexity of meaning through critical reflections on text, visual images, or artifacts.

Social Sciences

Students will

- describe major concepts and theories of at least one discipline in the social sciences; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena.

Aesthetics (SUNY The Arts)

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

World Languages

Students will

- exhibit basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a world language; and
- demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

Students will

- clearly articulate an issue or problem;
- identify, analyze, and evaluate ideas, data, and arguments as they occur in their own or others' work;
- acknowledge limitations such as perspective and bias; and
- develop well-reasoned (logical) arguments to form judgments and/or draw conclusions.

Information Literacy

Students will

- locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline;
- evaluate information with an awareness of authority, validity, and bias; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination.

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY LOCAL GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the SUNY General Education categories and SLOs required by Binghamton University, (above) the following local categories and learning outcomes are required for Binghamton University undergraduates:

Global Interdependencies

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of how two or more distinctive world regions have influenced and interacted with one another and how such interactions have been informed by their respective cultures or civilizations.

Wellness

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of such topics as diet and nutrition, physical development, substance abuse, human sexuality, stress and stress reduction techniques, relaxation methods, or the characteristics that define physical, mental or emotional fitness/wellness

Physical Activity

Students will

- demonstrate one or more of the following attributes: neuromuscular coordination, muscular strength and muscular endurance, cardio-respiratory endurance, or flexibility.

United States History (for students who have not satisfied this requirement prior to matriculation, this requirement will be satisfied by taking a D course that adds these additional SLOs to the required D SLOs. This continues our current practice.)

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of an historical narrative of the United States and its institutions over a period of at least a century, including connections to prior and subsequent periods, with this narrative including several themes that have shaped the development of American society, such as the struggle for democracy, citizenship, racial and gender inequality, religious freedom, and civil rights; the conflicts that have erupted over these issues; and the consensus, if any, that has been reached on each of them.
- demonstrate an understanding of how the history of the United States relates to the history of at least two other regions of the world, as a means of understanding America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.