

## Academic Programs

### Implementing the New Core Curriculum Overview

In October 2009, the Board of Regents approved a revision of the University System of Georgia's core curriculum to allow for greater flexibility in aligning students' general education experience with individual institutional missions and strategic plans and to increase the use of learning outcomes. The revised policy provides minima requirements in each domain area (e.g., communication skills, quantitative skills, humanities/fine arts, natural sciences, mathematics, technology, social sciences, and institutional options), includes additional learning requirements in global perspectives and critical thinking, maintains the USG's transfer guarantee of core courses, and keeps the total number of hours required (i.e., 42 semester credits) the same. The Humanities and Fine Arts area now includes Ethics as part of the array of courses to be offered in this domain.

The revised policy also requires all institutions to develop at least one student learning outcome for each domain area. These outcomes must be approved by the Council on General Education and institutions must regularly assess these outcomes as a part of their required report on comprehensive program review to the Office of Academic Programs. Assessment of general education is also part of each institution's reaccreditation by SACS, and the results of each institution's SACS evaluation of general education must be submitted to the Office of Academic Programs. Although SACS reaccredits USG institutions on a 10-year cycle, CPR reports of general education to the System Office must be completed every five years. The timing of SACS reaccreditation varies across USG institutions, but institutions must submit their SACS evaluation of general education at the first SACS review following implementation of the new Core. Because the first year of implementation of the new Core is Fall 2011, institutions with a SACS review between 2012 and 2017 will submit the results of the SACS evaluation of their core. For institutions whose next SACS review is after 2017, they will be required to submit a CPR report on general education to the System Office five years before their next SACS review.

View the full report of the revised policy ([Revised Core Curriculum Policy](#))

### Implementation Steps & Resources for Institutions

#### Step 1:

The first step in implementing the new core requires all USG institutions to develop at least one student learning outcome for each system-level learning goal in the Core.

AREA	LEARNING GOAL
Area A1	Communication Skills
Area A2	Quantitative Skills
Area B	Institutional Options
Area C	Humanities, Fine Arts, & Ethics
Area D	Natural Sciences, Math, & Technology
Area E	Social Sciences
Area F	Lower-Division Major Requirements
Overlay Requirement	U.S. Perspectives*
Overlay Requirement	Global Perspectives*
Institutional Plan	Critical Thinking*

\* Three new learning goals, US Perspectives (US), Global Perspectives (GL), and Critical Thinking (CT), have been added to the core. The US and GL are incorporated as "overlay requirements," designated courses in Areas A-E which every student must take in order to complete core requirements. Institutions will develop individual plans for the CT requirement to insure that students who complete Areas A-E acquire foundational critical thinking skills.

- Sample learning outcomes for each learning goal can be found in the full report of the revised policy ([Revised Core Curriculum Policy](#)).
- After the learning outcomes for each Core goal are approved by the appropriate curriculum approval processes at an institution, they must be approved by the Council on General Education. All learning outcomes must be collegiate level, not skills-based, and broadly focused. They must also be consistent with the learning goals and with the mission of the University System of Georgia.
- The academic advisory committees will specify learning outcomes for each Area F and submit them to the [Council on General Education](#) for approval. These learning outcomes must be collegiate level and provide an appropriate base for later learning outcomes in the relevant degree program. They must be consistent with the mission of the University System of Georgia.

## Step 2:

After an institution's learning outcomes for the Core are approved by the Council on General Education, each institution must develop and implement the assessment of all Core learning outcomes. Assessment of general education is now required of all institutions by the new USG Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) Process and must be part of the institution's regular reporting on CPR (see Institutional Responsibilities on the USG [CPR Website](#) in the Office of Academic Programs). SACS' final recommendations and findings regarding the assessment of general education outcomes (if any) must also be reported to the Office of Academic Programs.

## Timeline

### 2009-2011

- All four-year institutions revise existing core curriculum requirements and submit required Core learning outcomes to the Council on General Education for approval.
- Institutions also develop assessment plans and report those plans to the Office of Academic Programs for approval.

### Fall 2011

- New Core Curriculum requirements and assessment of the Core are implemented at all USG institutions except two-year colleges. In order to facilitate transfer of students to four-year institutions, two-year colleges revise their core curriculum requirements and have their Core learning outcomes approved by Council on General Education.

### Fall 2012

- Revised Core Curriculum is fully implemented at all USG institutions. Reporting of assessment of general education to the System Office is now required no later than every seven years. **For institutions that began implementation and assessment of the Core in 2011-2012, reporting is required no later than 2017.**

See the [Cycle for Institutional CPR Review of the New Core Curriculum](#).

## Resources

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### **System-wide Resources:**

- [Regents Administrative Committee on Effectiveness & Accreditation \(RACEA\)](#) — RACEA serves as a catalyst for strengthening the University System of Georgia and its member institutions as leaders in key areas of institutional effectiveness and regional accreditation, including quality enhancement, student learning outcomes, comprehensive program review, assessment practices, continuous improvement, accreditation compliance, and public accountability.
- USG Faculty Development Workshops on Institutional Effectiveness & Student Learning Assessment (see [USG Faculty Development Website](#) for recorded sessions).

### **Additional Resources on General Education:**

- [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools \(SACS\) Principles of Accreditation](#) (PDF)  
The principles that cover general education (aka the core) are 3.5.1 and 3.5.3. Concomitant with guidelines established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, institutions through their assessment of general education will assess the following five key principles regarding general education courses: (1) General education courses are college-level; (2) General education courses present a breadth of knowledge to promote intellectual inquiry; (3) General education is based on a coherent rationale; (4) Each course or experience is evaluated within the institution's overall rationale for general education; and (5) The general education component constitutes a minimum number of semester hours. In the case of University System institutions, the general education component represents 42 semester hours of study.
- [American Association of Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\) Documents on General Education](#)