

General Education Advisory Council

Proposal

Global and Cultural Awareness Requirement (GCA) for General Education

Overview

Universities across the United States are acknowledging the importance of requiring students in all majors to study concepts and master skills related to living in a diverse global society. During fall and winter term, OIT groups were surveyed about a proposed Global and Cultural Awareness (GCA) General Education requirement for OIT students.

Results of Group Interviews

OIT groups, almost without exception, and in line with OIT's practical focus, were interested in requiring OIT students to learn both knowledge and skills related to global and cultural awareness. Courses in these areas would

A. **require students to demonstrate skills** related to global/cultural awareness.

AND

B. **teach students the fundamental concepts** related to global/cultural awareness.

This does not mean that every group said this, only that the majority of those surveyed expressed this view. All groups agreed that skills emerge from understanding and that a list of outcomes would be useful for current course revision, future course design, and for assessment. A list of expected course outcomes will help guide further course development (see end of this document).

Review of GEAC Process

During Fall, 2009, and Winter, 2010, groups were interviewed about this proposal. The groups then had an opportunity to discuss two sets of outcomes related to Global and Cultural Awareness. The first list (the A list) identified skills important for students to demonstrate and that would help them to learn then show their competence in this area. The second list (the B list) included areas of knowledge. The groups were asked if OIT should have elements from one or both lists (skills and understanding) or if there were elements on the lists that groups felt would be critical to a General Education requirement (see Appendix A).

The interviews provided information to GEAC about groups' stated preferences related to knowledge and skills in this area. Other sources for the proposal can be found at the end of this document.

Rationale for Recommendation

Global and Cultural Awareness is a particularly important area where skills and knowledge combine. Reading books or taking exams on the topic of "cultural awareness" or different cultures does not necessarily guarantee that students would be able to demonstrate ways of knowing and behaving required by cultural awareness and tolerance for peoples and customs from many cultures.

These skills are important not just outside the United States, in a global economy, but they are also needed each day as students encounter those who are different. These skills are acknowledged by all groups at OIT to be vitally important to the employability of OIT graduates and to their success. In addition, this general education requirement must be applicable to all OIT students, rather than tailored to suit one major or another.

This is a unique general education requirement proposal since OIT is trying to establish a “do what you know” requirement. This practical focus suits OIT’s applied focus. As one OIT professor said, “Other universities emphasize knowledge; OIT emphasizes doing the knowledge.”

As you read the outcomes, please remember the following:

- Double-dipping will be allowed—that is, a course could count for both a General Education requirement in Humanities (or Communication or Social Sciences) and meet the Global and Cultural Awareness (GCA) requirement.
- The outcomes imply that departments will be developing new OIT courses to meet the outcomes.
- Courses can (and should) be designed with the outcomes in mind to make sure they meet the GEAC’s expected required outcomes. Courses will be designed to meet all 8 outcomes.
- Courses currently focusing on knowledge mastery can add skills-based teaching and learning and vice versa.

Proposal

OIT’s General Education Advisory Council proposes that a GCA requirement be added to the General Education requirements for OIT students. The Global and Cultural Awareness (GCA) designation for required courses at OIT would include the following list of outcomes and expect students to demonstrate both skills and understanding.

Recommended outcomes for Global and Cultural Awareness (GCA) Requirement.

After completing a GCA course, students should be able to

| Outcomes | Sources | Assessment |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 1. Demonstrate intercultural competence (so students can move across boundaries and into unfamiliar territory to see the world from multiple perspectives (AAC&U) (also called cultural fluency). | AAC&U, OIT course | Observation; role-play; activities |
| 2. Engage in conversations about cultural differences appropriately and respectfully. | OIT | Observation; role-play; activities, reports on on-the-job interactions |
| 3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate, interact, and work positively with individuals from various cultural groups. | AAC&U | Observation; role-play; activities |
| 4. Describe forces that shape culture(s) and co-culture(s), one’s own and the cultures of others. | AAC&U | Essays, exams, discussion |
| 5. Demonstrate comparative knowledge of the world’s peoples and problems. | OIT | Essays, exams, discussion |
| 6. Demonstrate knowledge of how culturally-based assumptions influence perceptions, behaviors, and policies. | OIT | Essays, exams, discussion |
| 7. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between groups as well as development of varied views, cultural practices, patterns. | AAC&U, OIT, others | Essays, exams, discussion |
| 8. Recognize cultural biases as well as racism, stereotyping, prejudice. | AAC&U, OIT, others | Essays, exams, discussion; role-play, activities |

Sources

GEAC members researched other sources to formulate these outcomes:

1. Global and Cultural Awareness requirements from a variety of other U.S. universities and one in Australia
2. American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Cultural Awareness Outcomes
3. Course outcomes of existing OIT courses
4. “Outcomes and Criteria for Transferable General Education Courses in Oregon,” final draft, 12/09
5. OIT data from surveys conducted Fall, 2009, Winter, 2010

Appendix A: Overview of Group Discussion Results, OIT Academic and non-academic groups, Fall, 2009/Winter 2010

School of ETM

| CIV | CET | EEE | Geomatics | Manage. | MME |
|---------|----------------|---------|-----------|---------|---|
| A and B | A and B (ABET) | A and B | A and B | A and B | Questions about assessment; one or other (ABET) |

School of HAS

| Dent. Hygiene | HUM/Psych | Math | MIT | Nat'l Sci | Nursing | Allied Health | Comm |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|--|-----------|---------|---------------|--|
| A and B | A and B | Both are important | A and B, but A absolutely vital; Importance? 9 or 10 on a scale of 10. | A and B | A and B | | A absolutely vital; can't get to A without B |

Alumni and Career Services

| |
|---|
| B 5 and B7 are key. |
| Students have no idea about how to interact with people when they get a job overseas. "No idea what they are getting into..." |

Some departments said demonstrating skills not "appropriate"; others said that demonstrating skills is vitally important. Majority said the latter. Several departments reiterated that "A" skills could be "measured." Most departments affirmed that students can't do A until some work in B.

Sample Course Outcomes: (COM 205 current outcomes)

Students will be able to 1. Explain the need for intercultural competence; 2. Analyze how personal beliefs, values and norms shape world view; 3. Discuss the forces that shape culture; 4. Analyze personal cultural orientations and communication behavior using intercultural taxonomies; 5. Identify cultural biases such as ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, social categorization, and racism; 6. Discuss how language both shapes and expresses culture; 7. Explain and provide examples of how nonverbal codes impact intercultural communication; 8. Ask critical questions and seek answers to learn more about cultures.