



Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

GE3: General Education Exception Request: College of Engineering

March 14, 2012

Divisional Chair Bisson is distributing an exception request from College of Engineering in search of feedback and advice from relevant committees. Chair Bisson would appreciate receiving committee feedback, including advice from CERJ concerning the Division's authority to grant the request.

Administrative Partners (DANN TRASK)

March 23, 2012 5:59 PM

Response continued on next page.

Dear Professor Bisson,

The L&S Executive Committee, in consultation with the L&S Committee on Educational Policy, opposes the requests by the College of Engineering for exceptions to the General Education requirement. Changes to campus requirements should be made campus-wide. Implementing changes unilaterally for a single undergraduate college undermines the whole principle of a common General Education requirement, as well as making transfers from one college to another very difficult for students.

Changes to the current General Education requirement may well be in order. However, they need to be considered by the appropriate committees to apply to the whole campus.

Sincerely,

Abigail Thompson, Chair
Executive Committee
College of Letters and Science

Courses of Instruction

April 13, 2012 9:12 AM

Dear Linda,
COCI reviewed the General Education Exception Requests (GE2 and GE3) from the College of Engineering. Our proposed response to each of their points are cited below –

(From the document titled "Request to approve permissions for students in the College of Engineering completing GE3.")

1. To allow GE3 topical Breadth and core literacy designations (domestic diversity and world cultures for social-cultural diversity and writing experience for writing) to apply to coursework taken prior to Fall 2011.

COCI Response: The committee is willing to endorse only GE3 topical breadth designations to apply to GE2 courses for currently approved courses. This will be an administrative correction which will be managed by the Academic Senate Office. We will write to departments who have courses that have been designated a GE3 topical breadth category but have not made the same designation for a GE2 topical breadth. We are willing to support this administrative correction due to the fact that the topical breadth categories did not change from GE2 and GE3. In fact, this was the only part of the revised General Education curriculum that went unchanged. We intend to make this change effective Winter 2013.

2. To allow undesignated lower division foreign language coursework to be used for Arts & Humanities topical breadth credit.

COCI Response: The administrative correction stated above may take care of some of the foreign language courses with this issue. It all depends if the course falls on the list that we found to have a discrepancy in topical breadth designation from GE3 to GE2.

3. To allow undesignated Communication 1 to be used for Arts & Humanities topical breadth credit.

COCI Response: The committee denies this request. Should they want to, the Communications department needs to be put this request forward via the course approval process.

Elections, Rules & Jurisdiction

February 13, 2012 4:14 PM

CERJ advises that the Division's authority to request an exception regarding the General Education requirement rests solely with the Committee on Courses of Instruction. DDB 56 states:

C. This committee shall have the following responsibilities with regard to the General Education Program:

1. Approval and cancellation of courses as General Education courses, except those offered through the Education Abroad Program.
2. Assignment of courses to appropriate areas within the General Education Program, except those offered through the Education Abroad Program.

Granting an exception would be tantamount to approval of courses as General Education courses, and assigning them to Topical Breadth would be assigning courses to appropriate areas, so it would be the responsibility of COCI to do so.

Graduate Council

February 8, 2012 11:12 AM

No response at this time.

Planning & Budget

February 13, 2012 4:14 PM

No response at this time.

Research

February 13, 2012 4:15 PM

No response at this time.

Undergraduate Council

March 15, 2012 5:05 PM

March 15, 2012

To: Linda Bisson
Chair, Academic Senate
RE: Requests for permissions for students in the College of Engineering completing GE3 and GE2 (both dated January 23, 2012)
From: General Education Committee, Maggie Morgan, Chair
Undergraduate Council, Jon Rossini, Chair

On March 1, 2012, the General Education Committee met to discuss the GE2 and GE3 Exception Requests from the College of Engineering. Before finalizing its formal response, the GE Committee would like to research the possibility of conflicts that might exist with current policy, definition of terms and clarification of the intent of each request. The GEC appreciates the opportunity it has been given and seeks to provide a response, but the committee needs to be confident of the accuracy of its researched answers. The committee is especially concerned with the far-reaching ramifications that its response may have. The Undergraduate Council met on March 14 to discuss these proposals and the GE subcommittee's response below.

As they correctly stated in the proposals, The College of Engineering does have the option in the new general education requirement (AS regulation 523D) to pursue individual program certification of general education requirements.

Our comments and questions:

The new GE program was specifically designed and approved as a requirement for all undergraduates at UC Davis. Generally, these proposals seem premature, and we would like to give the new program some time to work. We appreciate the concerns of the Engineering Dean's office, but we feel that uniformity is necessary for the success of the former and the new GE formats. The two general education programs currently in place on our campus are distinct and different and were not designed to have interchangeable parts. So, to answer the requests to replace one section or requirement with another is complicated and demands further specific research. We would like to offer preliminary comments here and also make requests for additional information.

There is concern about the issue of engineering students who switch majors. How would this work? This could make for serious problems if we approve blanket exceptions for Engineering and not campus wide. For example: do we tell a student who switches from Engineering to Chemistry that suddenly the GE courses that used to count don't any more? Or do we tell Chemistry that even though they never had any input, suddenly some of their students have looser GE requirements than others?

How many students will these proposals affect?

What is the proposed end date to these permissions to be used during this transition period?

Further comments on the specific points:

Response to "Request to approve permissions for students in CoE completing GE2."

1. To allow the topical breadth designations of GE3 to apply to GE2
2. To allow GE3 Writing Literacy courses to apply to the GE2 Writing requirement

Answer to 1 & 2: The GE3 program is intended as a more rigorous general education program, therefore, it seems somewhat sensible for students to use GE3 designated courses to fulfill GE2 requirements going forward but not the other way around. This would more easily apply in the Topical Breadth areas as those definitions have remained the same. While it is true that GE3 as a whole is meant to be more rigorous, in the process of making the "literacies" more rigorous, the change also made the "breadth" requirements potentially much less rigorous. In Physics, for instance, the number of courses that count toward topical breadth went from one to more than fifty -- no change in course content, just in designation for SE topical breadth. More research is needed before recommending that we disregard the designations in place and let many more courses count.

3. To allow GE3 Civic and Cultural Literacy courses to apply to the GE2 Social and Cultural Diversity requirement.

Answer: These are not the same thing, so a blanket approval doesn't make sense. While Topical Breadth definitions haven't changed, the new Core Literacies are quite different and don't easily apply to GE2 courses and aren't approved to do so. We need to have additional information on this topic before opining further.

Response to "Request to approve permissions for students in CoE completing GE3."

1. To allow GE3 Topical Breadth and core literacy designations (domestic diversity and World cultures for social diversity and writing experience for writing) to apply to coursework prior to Fall 2011.

Answer: This seems like it would be difficult to give a blanket approval to but may be fine on a case by case basis. If students who matriculated prior to Fall 2011 wish to change to the GE3 program, I believe it may be their choice to do so depending on the catalog rights rules within the college. It does not seem that the desire for students to switch from GE2 to GE3 was anticipated or spelled out in the regulation. More research is needed on this point. (The catalog rights are not published for COE online as they are for the other three colleges, so more research is needed on this point as well.) With no retroactive approval plan for GE2 courses in place, this seems difficult if not impossible to accomplish.

2. To allow undesignated lower division language coursework to be used for Arts and Humanities topical breadth.

Answer: The GE committee recognizes the inconsistency facing students in the new offerings, and the language courses are a good example of this. The committee also recognizes the contradictory language used in the regulations for the newly implemented general education requirements. An assumption was made in the introduction in the 2008 proposal revision of the regulations that "The number of topical breadth GE courses is greatly increased because most undergraduate courses will be assigned to a topical breadth area." However, the choice was made by the faculty and the General Education Task Force to let the departments self designate and submit courses in all areas for the new GE regulations, which were then approved or denied by the General Education Task Force (GETS) and the Committee on Courses of Instruction (CoCI)– both in the areas of topical breadth and the literacies. If this inconsistency and lack of enough GE3 courses indeed proves to be an unintended unfair outcome, which denies students access to courses they wish to take to enrich their education, this is a larger issue beyond this CoE proposal and may need to be addressed by the appropriate faculty bodies for an amendment to the new GE regulations. We are currently doing research regarding the statistics of numbers of courses currently approved for the new GE program. For Spring Quarter 2012, the GE2 Topical Breadth offerings number 357 and for GE3 the current number is 812. For the two literacies of GE2 the number is 370 and for the eight areas of GE3 literacy categories, the course offerings are 1,137.

3. To allow undesignated Communication 1 (Intro to Public Speaking) to be used for Arts and Humanities topical breadth credit.

Answer: The current designations for Communication 1, according to the catalog, are for GE2 – writing and for GE3 - Oral skills literacy. We don't understand the reasoning for this class to serve as anything other

than Oral skills literacy. If it were to have a topical breadth designation for GE3 it would be assigned to Social Sciences—yes? We understand there is a history of Engineering students taking this course as a major requirement and we need more information on this part of the request from both Engineering and the Communication Department. Most importantly, what is the practical difficulty for engineering students to take a designated GE3 Arts or Humanities course?