

**GEP Oversight Committee**  
**Major policy and procedures decisions**  
**Rev. Jan. 15, 2016**

Note: Several department-specific decisions are not included on this document.

**SECTION ONE: CERTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Course Certification -- Overview**

Instructors seeking course approval in one of the five GEP certification areas – First Year Seminar/Adult Learning Seminar, Faith and Reason, Ethics Intensive, Writing Intensive, and Diversity/Globalization/Nonwestern Area Studies – should submit the following materials to the relevant certification committee chair:

- Evidence of departmental or program approval for the course
- A complete syllabus that includes relevant GEP learning objectives and connects those objectives to course assessment measures
- Supplementary materials required by the committee (normally a statement explaining how the course meets the certification criteria)

Proposals should normally receive certification by the beginning of pre-registration in order to count for GEP credit during the following academic period. Specific submission deadlines (and decision deadlines) for new approvals in the certification areas are set by the GEP Oversight chair and communicated to faculty at the beginning of each semester [December 17, 2015].

**Certification Committee Norms**

Certification committees function by majority vote. Committee chairs shall call for a vote after members have reviewed and deliberated about proposals, according to the following procedural norms:

- Proposals should be evaluated in terms of the stated certification criteria
- All committee members should review submission materials before decisions are reached
- Proposals should be discussed before a final vote is taken, where discussion may proceed over email, or through some other shared electronic medium, or at a committee meeting
- Committee members should be prepared to explain their votes if called upon to do so

Once a course is approved the certification chair should inform the proposer or contributing faculty member, the department chair or program director, the Registrar, the CAS and HSB Advising Centers, and the GEP Oversight chair. The GEP Oversight chair should advise the Registrar about whether GEP attributes for approved courses should be placed at the section level or the catalog level.

Chairs must communicate the relevant reasons to proposers for any rejection decisions or revise and resubmit decisions in a timely manner [December 17, 2015].

### **Reviewing Certified Courses**

With respect to previously certified courses, certification committees may ask to see the syllabus for any course scheduled (or proposed to be scheduled) for GEP credit in order to verify that the course still meets the relevant criteria. Courses that do not meet the relevant criteria must be revised and reapproved before being scheduled again for GEP credit in subsequent semesters [December 17, 2015].

### **Certification Appeals Procedure**

Rejection and revise/resubmit decisions may be appealed. Reasons for appeal include:

- The certification committee did not follow the proper procedural norms (noted above)
- The certification committee acted in manner thought to violate the professed values or responsibilities of the SJU faculty, as those values and responsibilities are described in the SJU Faculty Handbook

The petitioner should provide a written rationale for the appeal and submit that rationale along with the original submission materials to the GEP Oversight (GEPO) committee. The GEPO has the right to determine whether or not the case merits an appeals investigation.

If an investigation is warranted, then the GEPO chair will seek any needed additional information from the petitioner and the certification committee members. Members of the GEPO should then discuss the matter and decide (by vote, if necessary) whether or not to take additional action. Potential additional actions include (1) asking the certification committee to review the submission again, consistent with procedural norms and (2) providing provisional approval for a specified period of time, subject to the condition that the proposer submit a revised version of the course to the certification committee [December 17, 2015].

### **General Certification Policies**

Each course being submitted for certification in a GEP certification area should identify GEP learning goals and connect those goals to the course's assessment measures [Dec. 8, 2011].

Each course being submitted for certification in a GEP certification area should have received departmental approval. Certification committees should communicate the expectation of prior departmental approval in their certification standards and/or calls for proposals. In the case of interdisciplinary programs prior approval should come from the relevant academic advisory board [Jan. 18, 2012].

GEP Oversight asks that new proposals normally receive certification by the beginning of pre-registration in order to count for GEP credit the following semester. For courses being offered fall 2012, exceptions may need to be made [Jan. 25, 2012].

Submission deadlines for new approvals in the certification areas are September 27 for approval for the subsequent intersession or spring semester and February 7 for approval for the subsequent summer session or fall semester [August 19, 2013].

(Note: These dates may need to be adapted to the Registrar's calendar.)

Once a course is approved the certification committee should inform the contributing faculty member, the department chair, the registrar, the CAS and HSB advising centers and the GEP Oversight Committee chair [Mar. 21, 2012].

### **Certification by Course/by Section**

Unless specified as certified for all sections, all courses in the three overlay areas and the First Year Seminar area shall be understood as certified by section. For each course certified by section, the approved syllabus shall be understood as providing a model for a GEP course in the relevant area.

Other faculty members, besides the faculty member whose syllabus was approved, may offer sections of the course for GEP overlay or First Year Seminar credit, provided that they are willing to follow the model set forth in the approved syllabus.

It is the responsibility of each contributing department to verify that all of its sections that are to receive GEP credit in a certification area are consistent with all of the essential, GEP-related components of an approved syllabus as judged in light of the certification criteria.

If there are questions or concerns about whether a particular section of an already approved course should count for overlay or First Year Seminar credit, or if an instructor plans to depart significantly from the approved syllabus with respect to its essential, GEP-related components, then the department should consult with the certification committee before scheduling the course for overlay or First Year Seminar credit.

As part of the review process, certifying committees may ask department chairs for the syllabus of any faculty member teaching a course in a certification area.

Unless otherwise specified, Faith and Reason courses are certified for all sections [Mar. 21, 2012]

### **Certification of Courses with Nonstandard Formats**

This policy specifies certification procedures for courses with nonstandard formats, where the term “nonstandard format” denotes summer, intersession, eight-week, online, and hybrid courses.

For any courses with nonstandard formats being proposed for GEP credit outside of the certification areas (First Year Seminar, Faith and Reason, Writing Intensive, Ethics Intensive and Diversity, Globalization and Non-Western Area Studies), it is the responsibility of the relevant department offering the course to determine whether the course is appropriate for GEP credit. Departments do not need to undertake a new review process each year for courses already approved for a particular nonstandard format.

Any course with a nonstandard format proposed for GEP credit in one or more of the certification areas may count for GEP credit in the proposed area(s) only if it has been approved first by the department and second by the relevant certifying committee(s). Summer, intersession, eight-week, online, and hybrid courses may be approved only if the relevant certifying committee receives a specific syllabus and proposal for the particular course format (e.g., an intersession syllabus for an intersession course proposal). Already approved courses with nonstandard formats need not be resubmitted to the certification committees for subsequent terms, provided the department believes that all sections of the course scheduled for GEP credit are consistent with an already approved model syllabus for that format, in accordance with the GEP policy on certification by course/section. The First Year Seminar may not be offered in any nonstandard format [February 6, 2014, updating the September 2012 policy on summer and intersession approval].

### **Certification Criteria Changes**

Any proposed changes to the GEP certification criteria by the certifying committees must be approved by GEP Oversight and the Provost [Oct. 24, 2012].

## **SECTION TWO: OTHER (NON-CERTIFICATION) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Phased Implementation – Classes of 2014, 2015 and 2016**

Of the four GEP requirements, Faith Reason and the three overlay requirements, students in the class of 2014 need to satisfy two of the four requirements and students in the class of 2015 need to satisfy three of the four [Feb. 13, 2012].

Of the three GEP overlay requirements, students in the class of 2016 need to satisfy two of the three requirements; students in the Class of 2016 must take a Faith Reason course [April 11, 2013].

### **Multiple Overlays**

All courses except for the six signature courses can be submitted and approved for certification in one, two or three of the overlay areas (i.e., Ethics Intensive, Writing Intensive, and/or Diversity/Globalization/Non-Western) [Feb. 13, 2012].

With the exception of the first Religious Difference course that a student takes which cannot count for credit in the Diversity/Globalization/Non-Western overlay area, students may receive credit for anything for which a course is certified in the GEP. This means that a single course can count for overlay credit in three areas, if certified in each [Feb. 13, 2012].

### **Overlays and the Signature Core**

The signature common core courses – i.e., ENG 102, HIS 154, PHL 154, THE 154 – cannot count for overlay credit in any of the overlay areas [Feb. 13, 2012].

First-year seminars may be certified in the Diversity/Globalization/Non-Western overlay area but may not be certified as either ethics-intensive or writing-intensive [Feb. 1, 2012 and Feb. 13, 2012].

Courses certified as Faith-Reason may also be certified as writing-intensive but may not be certified in any other overlay area [Feb. 13, 2012].

### **First Year Seminar**

The GEP Oversight committee recognizes that the First Year Seminar should not have any prerequisites [Apr. 4, 2012].

A course taken for First Year Seminar credit cannot count for any other Signature or Variable GEP credit [Apr. 4, 2012].

Acknowledging that there is insufficient information at this time, the GEP Oversight committee accepts, for the time being, the current practice according to which all transfer students, even freshman transfer students, are exempt from the First Year Seminar requirement. The committee also accepts the current practice according to

which students who enter SJU in the spring of their first year without having completed any past college coursework are required to take a First Year Seminar. These issues, however, require further study [May 9, 2012].

Students who fail to successfully complete a First Year Seminar during one of their first two semesters at SJU will be required to take an additional Philosophy or Theology/Religious Studies course as a replacement for the FYS. This replacement course cannot count for any other major or GEP requirement [February 28, 2013].

Note: In exceptional cases, students who fail to successfully complete a First Year Seminar during one of their first two semesters at SJU may be allowed to register for a First Year Seminar in their third SJU semester, provided that they receive approval from the relevant Associate Dean and register only after the end of the designated registration/rostering period for first-year students. Even if an exception is granted, if the FYS is not completed by the end of the third semester, the student will be required to take an additional Philosophy or Theology/Religious Studies course as a replacement for the FYS. This replacement course cannot count for any other major or GEP requirement. If a student withdraws from SJU during their third semester and returns in a later semester, the student will then need to take an additional Philosophy or Theology/Religious Studies course as stipulated above [February 28, 2013].

### **Adult Learning Seminar**

Courses may count for PLS GEP Adult Learning Seminar credit only if they have been approved by the First Year Seminar certification committee on the basis of Adult Learning Seminar certification criteria [November 6, 2014].

### **Writing Intensive**

Students can satisfy their writing-intensive requirement in the first year provided that they have met all pre-requisites for the course and taken ENG 101 Craft of Language (or had the ENG 101 requirement waived) [Jan. 25, 2012].

Foreign language courses can be certified as writing-intensive courses, provided that they are found to have met the certification standards [Jan. 18, 2012].

For the purpose of fulfilling the GEP requirements a course is normally understood as a semester unit to which a value of three or more credits is assigned. However, a two-credit course may be certified as writing intensive if, according to the writing-intensive committee, the course meets the certification standards and the nature and amount of writing instruction, assignments and pedagogy would be sufficient for the writing-intensive aspect of a three-credit, writing-intensive course [Apr. 18, 2012].

### **Electives**

It is a finding of the GEP Oversight committee that all majors outside of Education must allow for a minimum of six free electives [April 18, 2012].

### **Prerequisites for Overlays**

Prerequisites should be hard constraints in Banner for all Ethics Intensive and Writing Intensive courses. Students cannot register for the course without having taken the relevant prerequisite (or AP/transfer equivalent) [January 31, 2013].

### **Integrative Learning Component**

Students who satisfy their Variable GEP natural science requirement by completing two three-credit, lecture-based natural science courses (instead of a single four-credit, lab-based course) may not use either of their two GEP natural science courses also to satisfy a GEP ILC requirement [May 9, 2012].

For all ILC changes the department proposing to change its GEP ILC requirements should first consult the department(s) offering the ILC course(s) and also notify the GEP Oversight committee [May 9, 2012].

When a department or program changes its ILC requirements the new ILC requirements are only effective under the new catalog [September 19, 2012].

Students who change their major after completing all ILC requirements for the first major are not required to complete the ILCs that are specified by the new major. If a student has completed one ILC course for the old major then he or she only needs to complete two ILC courses for the new major to meet the GEP requirement. If a student has completed two ILC courses for the old major then he or she only needs to complete one ILC course for the new major to meet the GEP requirement. Students may need to complete additional courses if those courses are considered essential to the new major. But any additional courses required by the new major are major requirements and not "ILC" courses, since the ILC is a GEP requirement and not a major requirement. When a student changes his or her major the department chair or program director of the new major should note explicitly on the change-of-major form which ILC requirements (or courses listed as ILC requirements) the student must complete as part of his or her GEP and major requirements [Sept. 19, 2012, clarifying and updating a CITF policy].

Students with a double major are required to complete the ILCs for the primary major only. Any other courses listed as ILCs and required of students in their secondary majors (as essential to the major) are to be considered major requirements and not GEP requirements. Students with a double major should be allowed to designate which of their majors is primary and which is secondary [Sept. 19, 2012, clarifying a CITF policy].

Interdisciplinary programs are free to select any CAS courses as ILC courses for students, provided that those courses do not also double count for students as major courses, GEP Signature courses, or Variable core courses [September 19, 2012].

### **GEP Oversight Policy on Changing GEP Goals / Objectives**

Any SJU faculty member may propose changes to the student learning goals or learning objectives of the General Education Program (Undergraduate Day or Professional and Liberal Studies). Proposed changes must be submitted to the General Education Oversight committee (GEPO) for review. Upon review, the GEPO shall determine that the proposed changes fall into one of the following categories:

- . (1) Changes aimed primarily at improving the assessment process (e.g., formulating a learning objective in more measurable terms);
- . (2) Changes aimed primarily at reconciling the learning goals and objectives with the stated purposes or course descriptions, objectives, and rationales of the *2008 SJU Comprehensive Curriculum Review Final Report* (e.g., adding or subtracting a learning objective based on the text of the Final Report along with the departmental understanding of a particular course);
- . (3) Substantive changes to the stated purposes or course descriptions, objectives, and rationales of the *2008 SJU Comprehensive Curriculum Review Final Report*.

All proposed changes in categories (1) and (2) will be decided by the GEPO in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, including one or more of the following: departments or programs, the GEP Assessment committee, GEP certification committees, the Institutional Effectiveness committee, and the Associate Provost for Academic and Faculty Support.

All proposed changes in category (3) would have to be taken up as mandates through the normal governance process. Any subsequent study and action steps should involve ongoing consultation with the GEPO. The GEPO may advise that certain changes should not be approved unless they were to garner majority faculty support through a faculty- wide deliberative process and vote (e.g., changes that would in effect eliminate or alter the fundamental purpose of a structural component of the curriculum such as a Signature Core requirement) [April 23, 2015].

### **Nonnative Language**

The Modern and Classical Languages Department should have oversight to determine which languages count for the non-native language GEP requirement [February 26, 2015].

### **Transfer Students**

With respect to GEP ILC requirements transfer students should be considered 'change of major' students in the following sense: Any Arts and Sciences courses already completed elsewhere by an incoming transfer student may count as satisfying his or her ILC requirements, provided that these courses are not at the same time counted as meeting GEP Signature, GEP Variable or primary major



requirements. Transfer students who transfer in all three of their ILC courses nevertheless may be required to take one or more courses listed by their SJU major departments as required courses, if those courses are deemed essential to the major [December 18, 2012].

### **GER Curriculum**

It is a finding of the GEP Oversight committee that the GER committee should be disbanded. Any remaining GER curriculum questions should be addressed by the GEP Oversight committee. GER documentation should be archived [March 21, 2013].