

## Governors State University

## Student Learning Outcomes for General Education

**Introduction**

The purpose of General Education at Governors State University is to prepare students to participate in a dynamic and diverse world. It provides students with a broad foundation of knowledge, facilitates social responsibility, and provides the practical and intellectual skills needed by capable citizens. This General Education foundation will integrate in-depth study in a specific area of interest and application to the wider world. The GSU General Education Student Learning Outcomes are organized into four areas suggested by the American Association of Colleges and Universities: foundational knowledge, practical skills, social responsibilities, and integrated learning.

**Foundational Knowledge** outcomes are supported by the content of core general education courses and provide a basis for understanding more specific information in each student's major area of study. The core courses include study of culture and politics, physical and natural sciences, and the arts. At the conclusion of an undergraduate degree program, the student will be able to:

- Define key terms related to human cultures and the physical and the natural world, both in historical and in contemporary settings.
- Describe the physical and the natural world and the boundaries and practices of human cultures.
- Identify current economic, biophysical, and social challenges.
- Demonstrate familiarity with diverse perspectives on complex scientific, social, economic, technological, or aesthetic challenges by constructing a cultural, political or technological argument in the form of a written project, laboratory report, exhibit, performance or community service design.
- Demonstrate understanding of at least two academic fields by applying the perspectives and literature of those fields and proposing a "best approach" solution to a complex question, problem, or challenge using evidence from those fields.

**Practical Skills** are practical and intellectual abilities that help students demonstrate the knowledge that they have gained. These skills are developed and used throughout the general education curriculum. They include the ability to think critically, to think creatively, and to solve problems. In addition, written and oral communication skills, information literacy, quantitative literacy, and collaborative skills are included in this set of student learning outcomes. At the conclusion of an undergraduate degree program, the student will be able to:

- Use relevant disciplinary conventions, including citation of sources.
- Demonstrate the ability to define an information need and then locate, retrieve, critically evaluate, and use that information.

- Demonstrate the ability to translate verbal problems into mathematical or logical language and the ability to construct valid arguments using the accepted symbolic system of mathematical reasoning.
- Construct quantitative analyses and evaluation of data.
- Use analytic inquiry and written, oral, and visual modes of communication to explain theories and approaches to problems.
- Generate evidentially-supported and well-developed arguments that reflect sound interpretations and analysis of social and ethical issues.
- Incorporate diverse evidence in multimodal projects, papers, or performances appropriate for a specified audience.
- Demonstrate the collaborative and cooperative practices needed to function effectively and responsibly in a diverse public square.
- Construct an individual or group project requiring assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs or techniques.

**Social Responsibility** is the development of an awareness of personal and social obligations needed for success in a diverse and global society. Learning outcomes in this area include those related to civic engagement, intercultural knowledge, ethical reasoning, and appreciation for lifelong learning. At the conclusion of an undergraduate degree program, the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate academic and intellectual honesty and an appreciation for lifelong learning.
- Demonstrate the ability to accept and act on constructive criticism.
- Demonstrate a commitment to an ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable planet.
- Demonstrate an understanding and an appreciation of individual cultural perspectives, including non-Western and non-dominant ways of knowing.
- Explain diverse perspectives on contested ethical or policy issues.
- Evaluate insights and evidence on contested issues derived from a range of scholarly, cultural, and community perspectives.
- Frame a response to an ethical or policy question using scholarship from the student's major field of study and at least one other discipline.
- Collaborate in developing, implementing, and evaluating a community-based project.

**Integrative Learning** student learning outcomes require the combining knowledge gained early in the general education courses with the more specific knowledge gained in the area of the major. Thus, this category represents synthesis of knowledge and advanced intellectual accomplishment. At the conclusion of an undergraduate degree program, the student will be able to:

- Frame a complex scientific, social, technological, economic, or aesthetic challenge or problem.
- Respond to the problem with a summative project, paper, or practice-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques in the student's major field and incorporating information from at least two disciplines.