

A Framework for General Education in the University of the Philippines in the 21st Century

Executive Summary

This framework rearticulates liberal education for the Filipino as the bedrock of the UP General Education (GE) program. Based on an analysis of national and international developments affecting the Philippine higher education system, including the continuing trend towards specialization and the need to enable students to effectively address increasingly complex issues and challenges in the 21st century, the framework affirms that the UP GE program must be liberal, holistic and integrative in orientation, developing not only measurable skills or competencies but, equally important, the capacity for and capabilities in critical and creative thinking and action. The UP GE program reflects and promotes the loftiest principles at the core of a UP education, going beyond inculcating habits of thought and ways of perceiving to developing the ideals of humanism and nationalism (*pagiging makatao at pagiging makabayan*). The UP GE program is a transformative education, enabling and encouraging students to take creative and constructive action that contributes to the improvement of their community, the nation, and the world, based on a strong sense of their cultural and historical identity as well as a sense of a shared humanity.

In line with this philosophy, the framework puts forward the following UP GE program objectives, curriculum structure, pedagogical principles, and implementation guidelines:

- 1) The UP GE program shall aim to develop *leadership* characterized by integrity and honor, excellence, and public service — the hallmarks of a UP education. To this end it shall provide students with a broad foundation of study that will: broaden intellectual and cultural horizons; hone critical and creative thinking; develop a passion for learning and scholarship; cultivate a high sense of intellectual and moral integrity; and foster a commitment to nationalism and social justice. (*See Section 3.0 GE Program Objectives*)
- 2) The UP GE curriculum shall be a streamlined interdisciplinary curriculum consisting of 21-36 units of core and elective GE courses drawn from the arts and humanities; social sciences and philosophy; and mathematics, science, and technology domains. Each CU shall determine the number and mix of core and elective GE courses to be taken by their students to effectively meet the GE program objectives and develop the envisioned GE student attributes. It is envisioned that a subset of core courses shall be determined to be common among the sets of core GE courses identified by all CUs. These common core courses to be taken by all students across the UP System shall provide a common foundation for the development of the envisioned GE attributes of integrity, scholarship, broad intellectual and cultural horizons, and nationalism, and a shared learning experience that serves as the hallmark of a UP education (*“Tatak UP”*). (*See Section 4.0 The GE Curriculum Structure*)

- 3) GE courses, singly and in combination, shall develop an appreciation for the liberal arts disciplines, the interconnections among them, and their continuing relevance in understanding and dealing with complex problems confronting individuals and communities and the nation and the world as a whole. While individual GE courses may have a specific disciplinary grounding, it is expected that together they shall develop a holistic and integrative understanding of key concepts and principles within and across disciplines. *(See Section 4.0 The GE Curriculum Structure)*
- 4) GE courses, which may be taught in English or in Filipino in accordance with the University policy on the medium of instruction, shall be learning-centered, with a clear focus on learning outcomes, appropriately designed learning activities, and formative and summative assessment of learning with timely feedback and support to all learners. Learning activities shall develop critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills through the appropriate use of learning resources and technologies. *(See Section 5.0 Pedagogical Principles)*
- 5) GE courses shall be taught by faculty members who are specialists in their fields but who are also interdisciplinary in orientation. The development of teaching and learning resources for each course shall be a collaborative effort among faculty members in the different constituent universities (CUs) who are teaching the same GE course. GE faculty shall be provided with relevant instructional support services and training, and encouraged to undertake research on GE and publish such work in scholarly journals. *(See Section 6.0 Guidelines for Program Implementation)*
- 6) The administration of the GE program shall be a collaborative effort of the faculty handling the GE courses, the CU GE Program Coordinators and GE Centers, the CU GE Councils or Committees, and the System GE Council. The CU GE Councils or Committees and the System GE Council shall be responsible for the policy-making aspects of program administration, and the GE faculty, GE Program Coordinators, and GE Centers shall be responsible for program implementation. *(See Section 6.0 Guidelines for Program Implementation)*
- 7) Regular evaluation of GE courses and the GE program as a whole shall be undertaken at the CU and System levels. The design of GE program and course evaluation shall be collaboratively planned by the System GE Council and CU GE Councils or Committees at the outset (i.e., upon the adoption of this proposed GE program framework). *(See Section 6.0 Guidelines for Program Implementation)*

A Framework for General Education in the University of the Philippines in the 21st Century¹ by the UP GE Task Force²

1.0 Context and Rationale

Since its institution more than half a century ago, the UP General Education (GE) program has undergone two major revisions. In 1986 the 63-unit³ GE program was cut to 42 units of prescribed Humanities and Communication, Social Sciences and Philosophy, Mathematics and Natural Science courses.⁴ In 2001 the ‘cafeteria’ model was adopted where, instead of taking a common set of prescribed courses, students could select five courses each (15 units) in the Arts and Humanities (AH), Social Sciences and Philosophy (SSP), and Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) domains from an array of GE courses offered not only by the so-called GE “service” departments but also by units that in the past offered only specialist courses.

The institution of the GE program and subsequent program revisions⁵ may be viewed as a critical response to changing conditions both within and beyond the University, to wit:

¹ This framework for a revised UP GE program is based on ideas that emerged from discussions around the 2013 System GE Council GE program revision proposal, including the GE mini-conferences and workshops that took place between May and November 2014. The first version of this framework was released for review by all UP faculty on 8 June 2015, and discussed at various GE workshops and conferences held in the constituent universities (CUs) from June to October 2015. The outcomes of this consultation process were presented to the System GE Council on 4 November 2015 and the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) on 11 November 2015. This final version of the framework takes into account various comments and suggestions made by the faculty in the various CUs and members of the System GE Council and PAC.

² The UP GE Task Force was organized at the UP Systemwide GE Conference held on 5-6 February 2015 in Tagaytay, to formulate a Systemwide framework that “shall articulate the rationale for the revision of the UP GE program and the philosophy and objectives, curricular structure, pedagogy, and guidelines for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the revised UP GE program” (Administrative Order No. PAEP 15-26A). The Task Force chair is Prof. Patricia B. Arinto (UP Open University) and its members are Prof. Benito Pacheco (UP Diliman), Assoc. Prof. Jerry Yap (UP Los Baños), Prof. Rosario Rubite (UP Manila), Assoc. Prof. Ma. Severa Fe Katalbas (UP Visayas), Asst. Prof. Antonino De Veyra (UP Mindanao), Assoc. Prof. Cecilia Faye Abalos (UP Baguio), and Prof. Lorna Almocera (UP Cebu).

³ The 63-unit GE program of 1958 included 9 units of English, 12 units of Spanish, 6 units of Math, 3 units of Logic, 9 units each of Humanities and Social Science courses, 6 units each of Biology and Physical Science courses, and PE 1 as a required course.

⁴ The 42-unit GE program of 1986 consisted of 15 units of Humanities and Communication courses, 15 units of Philosophy and Social Science courses, and 12 units of Mathematics and Natural Science courses. These included new interdisciplinary courses, namely, Social Science I and II, Natural Science I and II, and Science, Technology and Society (STS).

⁵ These include two relatively minor revisions, as follows: in 1971 students were given the option to take 12 units of Pilipino and/or English within the GE program (Evangelista, 1985); and in 2010, the ‘hybrid’ curriculum consisting of a small number of prescribed GE courses combined with elective or free choice GE courses in each of the three domains, was adopted.

- The 1958 GE program was conceived to counter the overemphasis on specialization and preparation for specific jobs that had led to “the fragmentation and proliferation of subjects... [and] the restrictive compartmentalization of knowledge and intellectual pursuits, and produced technical men and specialists found wanting as professionals and as citizens” (Tenmatay, 1960, p. 34). GE was viewed as “the unifying factor” that could help to arrest “the danger of community and national disintegration” through its formation of “the ideal citizen of a democracy” (Sinco, quoted in Guerrero, 1985, p. 356).⁶
- The revision of the GE program in the mid-1980s was precipitated by concerns about the management of the GE program with the splitting of the College of Arts and Sciences into three colleges in 1983, questions about the relevance to further education of the GE courses being offered (Bauzon, 1985), and the persistence of “past tendencies to look at disciplinary problems in isolation” (Angara, 1983). Kintanar (1991) also cites as factors in the 1986 GE program revision the formal reorganization of UP as a system of constituent universities (CUs), and the People Power Revolution of February 1986. That is, the new GE program was intended to provide a common learning experience that would be “the hallmark of a UP student, no matter which campus — Diliman, Los Baños, Manila, Visayas — he or she came from,” and its goal of “infus[ing] a passion for learning with a high sense of moral and intellectual integrity” was a response to “the damage that the ousted dictatorship had done to the nation’s moral fiber” (Kintanar, 1991, pp. 136-137).
- The impetus for the Revitalized GE Program (RGEP) of 2001 was the idea that “a university geared to the future must teach students how to learn [and] imbue them with a drive to keep learning for life,” and avoid “produc[ing] narrow-minded and self-centered specialists who are ignorant of what lies outside their specialty and who care only for their own interests” (Nemenzo, 2000). The 2010 RGEP review report cites three other factors in the adoption of the cafeteria model of course provision, namely: the logistical challenge of offering a common set of GE courses in the same sequence to a much larger undergraduate population, an emphasis on individual student choice, and lack of agreement regarding courses to be required of all students.⁷

⁶ Subsequently, in the years before and during Martial Law, the idea that university education should foster social awareness and a commitment to social transformation became more pronounced and gave rise to the infusion of nationalism into the curriculum through, among others, the adoption of Pilipino as medium of instruction in some courses in 1971 (Evangelista, 1985).

⁷ Beginning the mid-1990s there was a marked increase in the number of UP students, which put a pressure on departments with primary responsibility for offering GE courses (sometimes referred to as ‘GE service departments’) to open more sections and increase class sizes. At the same time, these departments felt the need to assert their own disciplinary expertise through the strengthening of their own specialist curriculum, graduate programs, and research. It was at this time that incentives for faculty to handle GE courses were adopted, such as the ‘GE multiplier’ and higher overload rates for GE courses taught off-hours. Enabling other departments to offer their own GE courses was a solution to the shortage of GE classes, which also “freed the humanities and social science departments” to expand their research programs and thereby contribute to “UP’s evolution into a research-based university” (*Re-examining UP’s General Education Program Final Report*, 2010, n.p.). However, the scheme also assumed a free market dynamic where departments had to compete for enrollees from among students who could freely choose for themselves which courses to enroll. This in turn further weakened attempts to define a common GE curriculum.

- The 2010 review of the RGEP found among students a lack of awareness of nationalism as a GE objective⁸ and a deterioration of oral and written communication skills (Rivera, 2015), among others. Based on the review, the various CUs once again prescribed courses in Communication, History, Mathematics, and Philippine Studies in the hybrid GE curriculum.⁹

Like the previous GE program revisions, the current review of the UP GE program is influenced by developments in the University's internal and external environments. The 2013 UP GE program revision proposal from the System GE Council cites two external developments as the most cogent: the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education or K to 12 program, and the 'internationalization' of higher education particularly in the context of ASEAN integration. Specifically, the 2013 proposal notes that the inclusion in Grades 11 and 12 of subjects that until recently were considered to be GE courses is an opportunity to streamline the GE program and strengthen the specialist or major programs to meet international program accreditation standards. In a parallel development, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) adopted in 2013 a set of College Readiness Standards and a new 36-unit GE program¹⁰ for all Philippine higher education institutions (except UP) in line with its competency-based and outcomes-based quality assurance system.

Some have pointed out that the expected outcomes of the K-12 program have yet to be realized and consequently, it may be premature to revise the UP GE program on this basis (Rivera, 2015; Sayson, 2015). However, there are other reasons for undertaking a review and revision of the UP GE program at this time. These include the continuing trend towards specialization within the University and the need to enable students to cope with and address increasingly complex issues and challenges in the world beyond.

Although recognition of the need for interdisciplinary research and curricula has grown, the emphasis on specialization in higher education institutions has become more marked in the last two decades. In US universities the following factors in the intensification of specialization have been noted: "long-term consolidation of the 'culture of research' in academia"; the focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); increased demand for programs in management, business, communication, and other "pre-professional fields"; lack of consensus regarding what should comprise a shared knowledge base for undergraduates; and "consolidation of some structural and organizational impediments to interdisciplinary education and programs of general education" (University of California Commission on General Education, 2007, pp. 1-3). These developments are also evident, in varying degrees, in the UP context. UP's mandate as a research university and the aspiration to boost the University's reputation among higher education institutions internationally have resulted in an increased emphasis on research and publication output for

⁸ The decline of social consciousness and nationalism among UP students was first documented by Doronila et al. in the 1993 KAVS (Knowledge Management, Attitude and Value Formation in UP Diliman Degree Programs) study.

⁹ Although the CUs prescribed different GE courses for their students, some courses like History/Kasaysayan and STS are prescribed by most if not all CUs.

¹⁰ The previous CHED GE curriculum consisted of 63 units.

faculty. UP's STEM programs have likewise enjoyed increased public and private sector funding for research and infrastructure development in recent years. Among applicants to UP's undergraduate programs, interest in business, computer science, management, and other professional fields continues to grow, even as enrollments in the humanities are declining — a development that reflects national and global trends in employment. As for defining a common curriculum for undergraduates, after years of RGEP it has become even more difficult to agree on whether to prescribe one set of courses and what these courses might be. Moreover, “the organizational dominance of discipline-based departments, decentralization of curricular responsibility¹¹, budgetary traditions, and the structure of incentives” serve to further entrench discipline-based organizational structures (University of California Commission on General Education, 2007, p. 3).

Specialization is not in itself a negative trend, as it is the growth of the disciplines and the application of specialist knowledge that fuel progress and development. But while the university must hone experts in various fields of specialization, it must also ensure that these experts, individually and as a group, will have a holistic appreciation of increasingly complex problems, such as climate change and natural disasters; new diseases and threats to health and public safety; economic exploitation and poverty; and social conflicts, war, and international terrorism. Addressing these and similar challenges requires not only experts with specialist knowledge and technical proficiency but also citizens who are imbued with the principles of democracy, human rights, equity and social justice, and peace, and who have a strong sense of personal responsibility and accountability and a commitment to public service and civic participation. At the same time, given the rapid pace of development and technological innovation, the exponential growth of knowledge, and increasing global interdependence, people must have the capacity for learning throughout the life span, which comes from having “a solid scientific and technological foundation as well as an array of higher-order cognitive and social skills” (Haddad and Draxler, 2002, p. 6).

In sum, the revision of the GE program has a broad context. As the writers of the 2010 GEP Review Final Report remind us, “UP has regularly revised its GE program in light of the changing contexts and conditions of the university and its experience in implementing the program.” While the periods between earlier GE program reviews were relatively long, the gaps between program reviews in recent years have become shorter. In the 1990s, the GE program was reviewed in 1991, 1992, and 1995, with the reviews culminating in the adoption of the RGEP in 2001 (*Re-examining UP's General Education Program Final Report*, 2010). The RGEP itself was subjected to a systemwide review in 2009, only eight years since its adoption. And then in 2013, a mere four years later, the UP System proposed a new set of program revisions.¹² The increasing frequency of GE program reviews reflects the increasingly rapid pace of change. But it is the direction rather than the pace of curricular reform that is perhaps more noteworthy. Without exception, all attempts to revise the GE

¹¹ This is especially true of the present GE program, with autonomous discipline-based departments offering a wide range of GE courses and without a “responsibility center” (Roman, 2010) for the GE program.

¹² It should be noted that there were discussions of the implications of changes in basic education and higher education policy and practice for UP's undergraduate programs, including the GE program, as early as 2011.

program are reaffirmations of the continuing relevance of liberal education as the core, or bedrock, of undergraduate education in UP.

This framework rearticulates the liberal education philosophy of the UP GE program in the 21st century. As such, it offers a clarification of the aims of the program, and outlines a curricular structure that is not only congruent with these aims but also customizable according to the requirements of different CUs and degree programs. Also proposed, in broad strokes, are pedagogical principles that can make the teaching of GE courses more responsive to the needs of increasingly diverse learners and more effective in terms of achieving the envisioned learning outcomes. Finally, some guidelines for program administration are suggested as a means of ensuring continuous program improvement and refinement.

2.0 UP General Education Philosophy

While the shape and size of the UP GE program have changed considerably through the years, in substance the program remains the embodiment of the UP tradition of “a liberal education for the Filipino” (Kintanar, 2001), which President Rafael Palma articulated in his inaugural address in 1925 thus:

The liberal education insures a broader outlook on God, man, and events; skills [sic] the student to react properly to the promptings of truth and to the world; and develops in him acumen and quickness of mind, so that in the course of time he is able to learn thoroughly the particular practices of a certain professional or technical activity.... The primary aim of all education is to form the habit of thinking, of judging facts and circumstances in their proper light, of logically deducing inferences from them — and this aim cannot be attained save through the instrumentality of a liberal education. (quoted in Doronila et al., 1993, pp. 136-137)

President Palma also asserted that liberal education is the University’s “chief means for giving widespread stimulation to the whole intellectual life of the country and supplying ourselves with men who shall comprehend their age and duty and know how to serve supremely well” (quoted in Fonacier, 1971).

Quoting President Lotus Coffman of the University of Minnesota, President Vidal Tan, who became UP president 26 years after Palma, described the product of a liberal education as a person with “broad interests, wide knowledge, cultivated tastes, appreciation and sound perspective ... a mind that is open and tolerant, ready and willing to face new situations and to interpret in terms of knowledge as it relates to social welfare ... a mind that includes a standard of ethics and a keen sense of responsibility” (quoted in Fonacier, 1971, pp. 130-131).

President Vicente G. Sinco, under whose term the UP GE program was established in order to more vigorously and systematically promote liberal education in the University, viewed liberal education as “the basic intellectual training for every man and woman who

must be enlightened and free citizens of this Republic.... [and] should include those disciplines that have relevance to a better understanding of man as a unit of civilized society and as a member of a democratic community" (Doronila et al., 1993, p. 137). He asserted that "[t]his course of general education should not be mistaken as a mere preparatory training for some particular profession or for some specialized activity" as "[i]t may happen that the work in which the student has been trained in school will no longer be useful at the time he is ready to earn a living." Rather, the GE program is a means of discharging "[t]he special task of the University [to do] the best it can to develop the man who can judge for himself, think for himself, and plan for himself so that he can truly govern himself. This is the aim of general education; and the person who has truly acquired it is the ideal citizen of a democracy."

The envisioned outcome of liberal education and the GE program therefore is a leader not only in the academic context but also in the civic sphere. As President Tan declared, UP "has the function of serving as a training ground of the country's future leaders" (quoted in Doronila et al., 1993, p. 141). According to President Onofre D. Corpuz, "The graduate of UP is not an ordinary university graduate — he or she inevitably becomes a leader in the profession or community.... There can only be one meaning of the leadership of the UP graduate and this is, leadership in the making of contributions towards the happiness, the safety and the justice of our nation" (quoted in Doronila et al., 1993, p. 141). Similarly, President Jose V. Abueva asserted that UP should produce leaders who are —

thoughtful men and women, capable of prayer and action, who are sensitive to our people's needs and aspirations, and can imagine a far better society, create options and alternatives, and work honestly without fanfare... We want women and men of vision and courage, of deep passion and great compassion, whose integrity and eloquence will teach and persuade other leaders and the citizenry. (quoted in Doronila et al., 1993, p. 141)

In the UP Charter of 2008, the expectation that the University shall develop among its students "responsible leadership for the nation" (Doronila et al., 1993, p. 141) is articulated in Section 3f thus: "[The University shall] [p]rovide opportunities for training and learning in leadership, responsible citizenship, and the development of democratic values, institutions and practice through academic and non-academic programs, including sports and the enhancement of nationalism and national identity."

Aside from describing the expected outcomes of a liberal education, the statements of the UP presidents quoted above imply the complementary relationship between GE and specialist education. By developing a deep understanding of the nature of knowledge and the foundations of the disciplines, GE prepares students for the major courses in specific areas of specialization. And by developing an appreciation of the connections between and among the disciplines, particularly in terms of their application to real world issues and problems, GE "augments and rounds out the specialized training that students receive in their majors" (Penn State). In addition, by bringing together students from various degree programs, GE courses broaden students' perspectives and enrich their experience of university education.

It might also be useful to clarify how GE relates to basic education, particularly because notions of the difference between the two influence decisions regarding which courses to include in, or exclude from, the GE curriculum.¹³ Like GE courses, basic education courses (or ‘subjects’ as they are referred to in that context) cover the basic disciplines, such as history, literature, mathematics, and science. However, the approach is introductory and the aim, generally speaking, is to develop basic skills, such as comprehension and problem solving. In contrast, GE courses aim to deepen the understanding of key ideas, theories, and paradigms in various disciplines, and develop higher-order cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis and integration, and problem formulation or articulation. Thus, in principle GE courses should not engage in remediation of the basic skills (cf. Tenmatay, 1960).

In sum, the UP GE philosophy is an ethos characterized by the following key principles:

- It is liberal, holistic and integrative (non-specialist), and non-utilitarian in orientation. It develops in students not only measurable skills or competencies but, more importantly, the capacity for and capabilities in both critical and creative thinking and action.
- It reflects and promotes the loftiest principles at the core of a UP education. It goes beyond inculcating habits of thought and ways of perceiving to the ideals of humanism and nationalism (*pagiging makatao at pagiging makabayan*).
- It is a transformative education, enabling students to change themselves, their worldview, and their world. It encourages creative and constructive action that contributes to the improvement of the student’s community, the nation, and the world, based on a deep understanding of being Filipino in the 21st century — that is, with a strong sense of one’s cultural and historical identity as well as a sense of a shared humanity.

3.0 GE Program Objectives

In keeping with the GE philosophy outlined in the previous section, the UP GE program should aim to develop *leadership* characterized by integrity and honor, excellence, and a commitment to public service, the hallmarks of a UP education. To this end, the UP GE program shall provide students with a broad foundation of study that will:

1. Broaden intellectual and cultural horizons;
2. Hone critical and creative thinking;
3. Develop a passion for learning and scholarship;
4. Cultivate a high sense of intellectual and moral integrity; and
5. Foster a commitment to nationalism and social justice.

¹³ This is so especially for the “skills” or “tool” courses, such as communication skills and math courses, which are perceived by some to be remedial in nature and therefore not appropriate for inclusion in the GE program (CHED, 2013; Rivera, 2015).

A sense of *honor* and *intellectual and moral integrity* are the expected outcomes of the GE program’s provision of a strong grounding in ethics, and its emphasis on developing among students a capacity for critical reflection, moral reasoning and ethical action, and autonomy and independence of mind.

A *commitment to excellence* shall come about from the *broadening of students’ intellectual and cultural horizons*, the *sharpening of their critical and creative faculties*, and the *development of a passion for learning and scholarship* through exposure to different knowledge traditions, perspectives, and paradigms;¹⁴ training in various disciplines and modes of inquiry; development of advanced literacy skills (textual, visual, digital) and higher-order thinking skills, including the ability to “recognize and define problems; analyze the structure of an argument; assess the relationships between facts, assumptions, and conclusions; and perform hypothetico-deductive processes” (Hursh, Haas and Moore, 1990, pp. 134-135); and cultivation of objectivity and open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and a global and cosmopolitan outlook.

Finally, a *commitment to nationalism and social justice* is the expected offshoot of training in historical and sociological analyses; exposure to *a nationalist tradition*; engagement with public issues; and development of *pagiging makabayan*, a sense of social responsibility, *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, and commitment to public service.

Thus, the envisioned GE student attributes of integrity and honor, scholarship and excellence, broad intellectual and cultural horizons, and nationalism and public service¹⁵ are the outcome of a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes or dispositions (KSAs). The list of KSAs (see Table 1) can be used as a guide in the design and evaluation of GE courses. That is, each GE course should have clearly specified knowledge, skill, and attitudinal objectives contributing towards the development of certain GE attributes (e.g. scholarship and nationalism, or broad intellectual and cultural horizons).

Table 1. GE Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

Knowledge	modes of inquiry, theories and frameworks, paradigms and models, philosophies and worldviews, ethical standpoints, technologies and methodologies
Skills	higher-order thinking skills, advanced literacy and numeracy skills, multiple literacies, skill in historical analysis and interpretation, acuity, intellectual rigor, critical reflection / reflexivity, creativity, innovation, flexibility and adaptability, communication skills, the ability to work collaboratively, social and cultural awareness, civic leadership

¹⁴ This refers to the various modes of knowledge, including sensorial and embodied knowledges or knowledges embedded in *danas* and *damdam*.

¹⁵ The acronym ISBN may be used for these GE student attributes.

Attitudes / Dispositions	a passion for reading and lifelong learning, a commitment to excellence, autonomy/independence, cultural rootedness/having deep cultural moorings (including taking pride in one’s ethnicity), a global and cosmopolitan outlook, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, gender sensitivity, ecological awareness and respect for the environment, civic consciousness, public mindedness, social responsibility, compassion and empathy, <i>pakikipagkapwa-tao</i> , commitment to social justice
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4.0 The GE Curriculum Structure

In line with the GE philosophy, the UP GE curriculum shall be a streamlined interdisciplinary curriculum consisting of 21-36 units of core and elective GE courses drawn from the arts and humanities; social sciences and philosophy; and mathematics, science, and technology domains.

Each CU shall determine the number and mix of core and elective GE courses to be taken by their students to effectively meet the GE program objectives and develop the envisioned GE student attributes. Core GE courses are courses that are prescribed for all students, regardless of their area of specialization or major. These core courses, which provide a shared experience for students in various degree programs, are considered by the CUs to be necessary for their students to effectively meet the GE program objectives while also reflecting the CU context and niche. The elective GE courses, on the other hand, provide students with an opportunity to pursue their interest in specific domains and to develop autonomy through the exercise of critical choice, which are skills and dispositions that the GE program should foster.

CUs may select their core and elective GE courses from the 11 GE courses proposed through the Systemwide GE mini-conferences¹⁶, as well as GE courses currently being offered under the hybrid GE program. They may also propose new GE courses for approval based on the principles and guidelines laid out in this framework. *(Section 6.0 includes the recommended procedure for instituting new GE courses and integrating existing GE courses under this proposed GE framework.)*

It is envisioned that a subset of core courses shall be determined to be common among the sets of core GE courses identified by all CUs. These common core courses to be taken by all students across the UP System shall provide a common foundation in the key liberal arts disciplines and a strong basis for the development of the envisioned GE attributes of integrity, scholarship, broad intellectual and cultural horizons, and nationalism. Moreover,

¹⁶ These 11 GE courses are: Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas; Wika, Kultura at Lipunan; Critical Perspectives in the Arts; Philippine Arts and Culture; Critical Perspectives in Communication; Self and Society; Ethics and Moral Reasoning in Everyday Life; Living Systems: Concepts and Dynamics; Probing the Physical World; Science, Technology and Society; and Mathematics, Culture and Society. The official syllabus of each course is for harmonization among the CUs concerned and for approval based on the principles and guidelines laid out in this framework.

since these courses are to be taken by all UP students in all of the CUs, they represent a shared learning experience that shall serve as the hallmark of a UP education (“*Tatak UP*”).¹⁷

In keeping with the liberal education philosophy of the GE program, GE courses should, singly and in combination, develop an appreciation for the foundational disciplines, the interconnections among them, and their continuing relevance in understanding and dealing with complex problems confronting individuals and communities and the nation and the world as a whole. While individual GE courses may have a specific disciplinary grounding, it is expected that together they will develop a holistic and integrative understanding of key concepts and principles within and across disciplines.¹⁸

5.0 Pedagogical Principles

GE courses may be taught in English or in Filipino in accordance with the University policy on the medium of instruction.

To ensure that GE program objectives are met, GE courses shall —

- be learning-centered, with a clear focus on learning outcomes and their alignment with teaching and learning activities and assessment of learning;
- make appropriate use of learning resources and technologies to develop critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills; and
- adopt an interdisciplinary pedagogy when appropriate.¹⁹

A learning-centered²⁰ philosophy requires a clear articulation of intended learning outcomes and design of learning activities which are aligned with and will result in the achievement of the learning outcomes.

¹⁷ For example, the following GE courses were selected as prescribed GE courses during the GE workshops held in UP Baguio, UP Cebu, UP Los Banos, UP Manila, UP Mindanao, the UP Open University, and UP Visayas: *Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas*; *Ethics and Moral Reasoning in Everyday Life*; *Science, Technology and Society*; and (except in UP Manila) *Critical Perspectives in the Arts*. The official syllabus of each course is for harmonization among the CUs concerned and for approval based on the principles and guidelines laid out in this framework.

¹⁸ This streamlined GE curriculum may also be complemented with non-GE but non-specialist courses (or sets of courses) focused on developing non-domain-specific skills that program faculty might deem necessary for effective learning and performance in the major fields. At present, degree programs prescribe some non-GE but non-specialist courses as requirements, such as Engineering students being required to take so many units of Math courses and Law students being required 15 units of undergraduate courses in English. Degree programs should continue to be able to specify which and how many such courses to require of their majors. Non-specialist courses in other critical literacies (such as critical digital literacy and analytics) for teaching and learning and personal and professional growth in the 21st century, may likewise be introduced.

¹⁹ These pedagogical principles are derived from theory and research on what makes for effective teaching and learning in higher education, as well as from the University’s long experience in the teaching of GE.

²⁰ The term ‘learning-centered’ is used instead of ‘learner-centered’ to underscore the fact that effective learning is the proper aim of both teaching and learning, and both teachers and learners (and the teaching-learning institution as a whole) have an equal stake in the achievement of effective learning.

Attention should be given to helping learners develop a deep understanding of concepts and appreciation of the knowledge structures and modes of analysis derived from the disciplines, through learning activities that will allow them to interact with various learning resources and experience disciplinary discourses and modes of inquiry. This resource-based and activity-based approach involves giving learners opportunities to engage with learning resources in various media that support different learning experiences (Laurillard, 2002),²¹ including among others —

- in-class teacher-led and collaborative learning (e.g., lectures, group discussions, workshops);
- guided independent study (e.g., reading books and scholarly articles; listening to podcasts; viewing videos; working through simulations and educational games); and
- experiential learning (e.g., site visits and field trips, immersion and service learning activities).

The learning activities should be designed to develop not only analytic skills but also creativity (for example, through construction of knowledge products), and the ability to critically reflect on one's own thinking and practice. Furthermore, there should be “integration across activities, whether associatively (building component skills into extended performance), constructively (integrating skills and knowledge, planning and reflecting), or situatively (developing identities and roles)” (Beetham, 2007, p. 27), according to the intended learning outcomes for the course and in line with the interdisciplinary thrust of the GE program.

Interdisciplinarity in the GE program should ideally be reflected not only in the content of GE courses (i.e., their focus on themes that call for the application of modes of inquiry derived from several disciplines), but also in how the courses are taught. There should be an emphasis on learning activities focusing on synthesis and integration of concepts

²¹ Laurillard's (2002) typology of media forms in terms of the learning experiences they support includes the following:

- narrative or presentational media (e.g., articles, slide presentations, and lectures, including video lectures and podcasts), which are used in tasks where learners are expected to assimilate information presented (i.e., the narrative medium is used to present the subject matter);
- interactive media (e.g., search engines, interactive videos, museum sites and portals) that are used in exploratory or investigative learning tasks;
- adaptive media (e.g., virtual worlds, simulations, computer games), which are useful for tasks involving experimentation and practice;
- communicative media (e.g., email, online discussion boards, chat applications, Web conferencing tools), which are useful for communication and collaboration between individuals and groups; and
- productive media (e.g., authoring tools, word and image processing tools, wiki and other collaborative writing tools), which students can use to generate or construct knowledge products (e.g., reports, videos, multimedia presentations, blogs) to articulate their understanding of the subject.

learned, in addition to lectures and other activities that expose students to perspectives on and analytic approaches to the course topics from different disciplines.²²

Also still in line with the learning-centered philosophy, GE courses should pay attention to the formative and summative assessment of learning (i.e., monitoring the achievement of learning outcomes), including providing timely feedback and support (e.g., mentoring) to all learners.

6.0 Guidelines for Program Implementation

The revised GE program is expected to be fully implemented in AY2018-2019. In the interim period, program implementation standards and mechanisms, including the guidelines set forth in this section, shall be put in place.

The administration of the GE program is a collaborative effort of the faculty handling the GE courses, the CU GE Program Coordinators, the CU GE Councils or Committees, and the System GE Council. The CU GE Councils or Committees and the System GE Council shall be responsible for the policy-making aspects of program administration, and the GE faculty, GE Centers, and GE Program Coordinators shall be responsible for program implementation.

6.1 Components of program administration

The administration of the GE program includes the following components: program planning, course design, course delivery, program coordination, and program evaluation.

Program planning is a Systemwide effort involving the System GE Council and the CU GE Councils or Committees. It includes not only curriculum planning, academic policy formulation, and program evaluation planning, but also infrastructure development — i.e., design of learning spaces, construction of facilities such as multimedia teaching labs, and development of technology-supported learning environments — in coordination with System and CU administrators.

²² Guillermo (2015) differentiates between multidisciplinary rotational/serial teaching and interdisciplinary teaching in the subordinate-service mode and the integrative-synthesis mode. In multidisciplinary rotational/serial teaching, faculty members from different disciplines take turns teaching different course topics. In interdisciplinary teaching, the topics are problem-based and faculty members from different disciplines discuss each problem from different disciplinary perspectives. Interdisciplinary teaching in the subordinate-service mode is based on a hierarchical view of the disciplines where the presentation of perspectives from the “subordinate” disciplines is oriented towards supporting the perspective of a/the dominant discipline. Interdisciplinary teaching in the integrative-synthesis mode gives equal importance to the perspectives from the different disciplines and works towards an integration and synthesis of these multiple perspectives on the problem. While ideal, the integrative-synthesis mode of interdisciplinary teaching could entail a lot of resources for course development and delivery. For GE courses, a hybrid teaching model that combines multidisciplinary lectures and interdisciplinary ‘synthetic-integrative’ discussions may be adopted whenever appropriate. The actual degree of hybridity will depend on the nature and aims of a course. It may be noted that some existing GE courses may in fact already be implementing this hybrid teaching model for theme- or problem-based course topics, even if it is not required under the current GE framework.

Course design for the common core courses to be identified from the core courses in all CUs shall be a Systemwide effort involving inter-CU experts' groups convened via the GE mini-conferences. The design and development of new or additional GE courses in the future should ideally involve experts from various CUs, on the assumption that these courses will be offered in more than one CU and students may enroll GE courses in more than one CU (either through cross-registration or by transferring from one CU to another) and apply for crediting of these courses. Still, a course may be designed by faculty from the proponent CU only. New courses proposed for institution should be submitted to the System GE Council for review via the CU GE Council or Committee (*see section 6.2 below*).

Course delivery is overseen at the CU level. It involves the teaching team for each course, as well as instructional support services such as the university and college libraries, laboratories, and educational multimedia units. It is recommended that each CU, through its GE Council or Committee, assign the administration of specific GE courses to specific departments or units.

Program coordination is also at the CU level. While GE courses may be lodged in different departments within a CU, it is recommended that a GE Program Coordinator at the CU level be designated to oversee the implementation of the CU GE program as head of the CU GE Center. The work of the CU GE Program Coordinator and CU GE Center shall include coordinating with the concerned departments the schedule of GE course offerings, course evaluation, training of GE faculty, and GE-focused research. For courses that require team teaching, the Program Coordinator shall be responsible for recruitment of experts from different units within a CU and, in some instances, from other CUs (*see section 6.4 below*).

Program evaluation should be at the CU and System levels. There should be an end-of-term evaluation of GE courses offered, which includes the student evaluation of teaching (SET), to be overseen by the Program Coordinator. At the System level, an annual evaluation of common core courses and program-wide evaluation every 2-3 years are recommended (*see section 6.5 below*).

6.2 Institution of courses

New GE courses may be instituted and existing GE courses integrated into this proposed GE framework according to the following criteria:

- a) The course must satisfy at least four of the five GE program objectives (*see section 3.0 above*); and
- b) The course must fall under one or more of the three knowledge domains (*see section 4.0 above*).

A proposal for course institution may emanate from any department or unit in any of the CUs, or from two or more departments within the CU or across two or more CUs. The proposal shall be referred to the CU GE Council or Committee for review and endorsement to the System GE Council. Once approved by the System GE Council, the final version of the course proposal shall be referred to the University Council/s of the proponent CU/s for

approval, through the usual curriculum oversight bodies (i.e., the College or Faculty Assembly and the CU Curriculum Committee). In summary, the flow of GE course institution is as follows:

from proponent department/s or unit/s within a CU or between two or more CUs
to CU GE Council/s or Committee/s
to System GE Council
to CU Curriculum Committee/s (through the Faculty or College Assembly)
to University Council/s

6.3 Course programming

Students may take GE courses at any year level, instead of taking all of their GE courses within their first two years in the University. Degree program coordinators may consider the recommendation on when a course is best taken (e.g., whether it should be taken in the first year or in later years) that is included in the course brief prepared by the experts who conceptualized the course.

It is also recommended that there be no block sectioning for GE courses of students from the same degree program, to provide students the opportunity to interact with students from other degree programs within their GE courses.

6.4 Faculty support

GE courses require faculty who are specialists in their fields but who are also interdisciplinary in orientation. Faculty handling GE courses should have at least a Master's degree and sufficient teaching experience in their area/s of specialization. Ideally, they should have exposure to interdisciplinary teaching and/or research, for example through membership in interdisciplinary research or study groups. And they should be given training in interdisciplinary pedagogies for the GE courses.

It is recommended that, through the CU GE Program Coordinators, course teams consisting of faculty members from one or more CUs be constituted for each GE course. The development of teaching and learning resources for each course should be a collaborative effort among faculty members in the different CUs who are teaching the same GE course.

Instructional support services should be made available to all GE course teams. For example, libraries should assist in the curation of open educational resources for each course, and multimedia production units should assist in the development of teaching and learning materials. The CU GE Center shall coordinate the provision of instructional and research support services for GE faculty.

In support of the scholarship of teaching and learning, faculty members handling and/or coordinating GE courses or programs should also be encouraged to undertake research on GE and publish such work in scholarly journals.

6.5 Program evaluation

To ensure that courses and the program as a whole remain relevant and effective, the following regular GE faculty conferences are proposed:

- an annual Systemwide GE conference by domain clusters
- a biennial program-focused Systemwide GE conference

There shall be a regular evaluation of GE courses and the GE program as a whole, at the CU and System levels, to measure the achievement of the knowledge, skill, and attitudinal dimensions of GE program and course objectives, as follows:

1. The achievement of knowledge and skill objectives should be evaluated annually at the course level.
2. There should be a cohort-based evaluation of the achievement of cross-cutting skills and attitudes (i.e., skills and attitudes or dispositions learned from the GE experience as a whole).

The design of GE program and course evaluation should be carefully and collaboratively planned by the System GE Council and CU GE Councils or Committees at the outset (i.e., upon the adoption of this proposed GE program framework). This work shall include the formulation of the research questions, framework, and methodology, including tools for data collection and analysis. The evaluation plan should be comprehensive, covering normative assessment (pretests and collection of baseline data), program implementation (teachers and administrators), and outcomes (exit evaluation of students).

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