

## University of Maine Faculty Senate Support of a University of Maine System General Education Transfer Block Process

### I. The UMS General Education Transfer Block

#### A. Background

The University of Maine System Credit Transfer/General Education Workgroup (an ad hoc group with representation from all seven campuses) has developed a General Education transfer block standard in order to facilitate transfer within the University of Maine System, and to be extended in the near future to include community colleges and possibly other institutions in Maine. The block in this proposal is termed "the UMS General Education Transfer Block".

There is a great deal of variation in general education programs in the University of Maine System, which is a strength inasmuch as these variations reflect real differences in mission, and also optimization of local resources for student learning. In order to preserve and respect such differences, the block description includes only existing common outcomes, with the understanding that each local general education program will be more extensive and will include other outcomes.

We have used the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes as the general framework within which our General Education outcomes are aligned, because the Essential Learning Outcomes describe, at a very general level, a set of elements which every baccalaureate liberal arts education should include (although not all elements need be included as parts of an institution's general education program). The LEAP outcomes thus provide a common framework and common language for describing the alignment and formulating common outcomes in General Education programs across the University of Maine System.

The mapping of the General Education requirements of each of the UMS campuses against the LEAP outcomes may be found through the set of matrices published at <http://umaine.edu/facultysenate/files/2014/11/UMSGenEdOutcomesMatrices.pdf>

#### B. UMS General Education Transfer Block Process, Applicability and Definition

Students who have completed the UMS General Education Transfer Block at any UMS institution currently accredited by NEASC will be regarded as having completed all of their General Education requirements at every other UMS institution, except for up to ten credits of additional General Education coursework to be specified by the receiving institution. The additional coursework may be the same for all source institutions, or it may be different for different source institutions, but it must be the same for all students from the same source institution. As nearly as possible, policies should be arranged so that transfer students satisfy the same outcomes and proficiencies as native students.

The limitation of ten credits of additional coursework does not include major requirements (if any) that would normally be satisfied by specific general education courses, for native students.

Each faculty Senate (or that Senate's designee) in the University of Maine System will be responsible for defining their own institution's block (containing a minimum of 35 credits) for students transferring out, in accordance with the description below. Because each campus may have institution-specific requirements, the transfer-out block need not include an institution's entire general education program. Each institution will publish a description of its transfer-out block on their website, so that the other institutions in the general education transfer block agreement can determine which courses (if any) need to be taken in addition by students transferring from that institution to their own. When the registrar at a "sending" UMS institution certifies that a transferring student has completed the block at the sending institution, the "receiving" UMS institution will accept the block as degree credit, with at least 35 credits counting as General Education credits, as described above. While individual course equivalents will continue to be assigned to each transferable course, they will be applied as a block to the general education portion of an eligible student's degree audit. The faculty Senates of the UMS will reconsider this agreement on a regular basis, as described below, and will either continue, revise, or terminate

the agreement, as it seems best based on the assessment and recommendations of a representative group similar to the group which created this proposal.

The *UMS General Education Transfer Block* is defined as follows:

1. It includes at least 35 credits of course work, with grades of C- or better in all courses.
2. Its outcomes align closely with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.
3. Its outcomes include all of the following content (although not necessarily using this language) with the understanding that each institution's general education will undoubtedly contain many more outcomes. These outcomes are common to all University of Maine System campuses, and are expected to be included in each institution's transfer-out block:

**1. Creative/Arts:**

Students will experience a sustained engagement with at least one of the creative or performing arts, and will be able to participate in, identify, or evaluate artistic and creative forms of expression.

**2. Natural Science:**

Students will demonstrate both conceptual and practical understanding of scientific method, including the abilities of hypothesis development and testing through observation or experiment, and evaluation of results. Students will engage in laboratory or field work at a level consistent with standard college laboratory and field courses.

Students will demonstrate the ability to work with both qualitative and quantitative information in applying the scientific process.

**2. Writing:**

Students will be able to write clear, coherent texts with adherence to proper mechanics. Students will be able to adapt their writing appropriately for different disciplinary contexts or audiences. Students will be able to effectively use writing as a means to engage in and communicate processes of critical inquiry, including analysis, synthesis, and argumentation.

**4. Quantitative Literacy:**

Students will be able to reliably perform mathematical operations at the college level. Students will be able to understand and evaluate quantitative information both in their college work and in broader public discourses. Students will be able to apply mathematical concepts and techniques in practical situations, to solve problems.

**5. Diversity/Cultural Knowledge:**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of cultural differences.

**6. Humanities:**

Students will be able to analyze or interpret significant texts or other cultural artifacts. Students will be able to understand or think critically about meaning (significance) and value, from either an aesthetic, philosophical, literary, or multidisciplinary perspective.

**7. Social Sciences:**

Students will be able to analyze or explain causal forces which shape social structures, institutions, or behavior. Students will demonstrate knowledge of multiple cultures.

**8. Ethical Reasoning:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to do one or more of the following:

- understand social and cultural value systems;
- understand and evaluate ethical perspectives on environmental issues;
- understand and critically evaluate ethical theories or concepts;

- work effectively with ethical issues and theories through analysis and evaluation of the theoretical, literary, historical or artistic texts through which fundamental ethical ideas and problems are presented.
- critically evaluate disciplinary claims in the context of ethical, social, and environmental issues.

### C. Block Transfer Evaluation and Revision/Block Transfer Committee

A committee composed primarily of faculty, with representation from every UMS system campus, will meet starting at the beginning of the third year in which block transfer is in force to evaluate block transfer and recommend to the system faculty senates whether to continue, revise, or terminate the block transfer agreement. Records will be kept by each campus regarding which students transfer either in or out under the block transfer agreement, so that data regarding those students can be collected and analyzed by the committee. By the end of the third year, each faculty senate will vote regarding whether to continue, revise, or terminate the block transfer agreement. If any faculty senate does not vote on this issue, that senate will be regarded as having voted for termination of the agreement at their campus.

## II. The University of Maine General Education Transfer-Out Block

The University of Maine through action of its Faculty Senate finds that UMaine students that complete each and all of the University of Maine General Education categories or sub-categories listed below meet or exceed the requirements of the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

University of Maine courses fulfilling the General Education requirements in each category listed below may be found at: [http://catalog.umaine.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=58&pooid=7422](http://catalog.umaine.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=58&pooid=7422)

Items 1 through 8 in Section I are roughly parallel to items 1 through 8 in Section II but are not identical. Both meet the intent and requirements for overall General Education outcomes under NEASC Accreditation criteria.

### 1. Human Values and Social Contexts: Artistic and Creative Expression

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least one course in the UMaine General Education sub-category of *Artistic and Creative Expression* under the broad area of *Human Values and Social Contexts*. UMaine students will have taken a minimum of 3 credits in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

Courses included in the UMaine Artistic and Creative Expression category engage the student in creative thinking and processes. A primary objective is to develop skills and intellectual tools required to make artistic and creative decisions, and to participate in, evaluate, or appreciate artistic and creative forms of expression.

#### UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:

Students completing the general education area of **Artistic and Creative Expression** will be able to:

1. Participate in, identify or evaluate artistic and creative forms of expression.
2. Develop skills and/or intellectual tools central to the artistic and creative process or its critique.

### 2. Science:

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least two courses in the physical or biological sciences in the UMaine General Education broad area of *Science*. This course accomplishment may be accomplished in two ways:

1. By completing two courses with laboratories in the *basic or applied sciences*;
2. By completing one approved course in the *applications of scientific knowledge*, plus one course with a laboratory in the *basic or applied sciences*.

UMaine students will have taken [a minimum of 7 credits](#) in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

Courses included in the UMaine General Education area of **Science** are those that meet the following criteria:

1. A laboratory course in the **applied physical or biological sciences** brings basic knowledge to bear on the solution of practical problems in engineering, medicine, agriculture, forestry, and other fields for which natural science forms the foundation. Normally applied science courses require one of the basic natural sciences (biology, physics, chemistry, geology) as a prerequisite, and carry at least 4 degree credits.
2. A course in the **applications of scientific knowledge** has the following attributes:
  - a) it focuses on one or more basic or applied natural sciences
  - b) it includes significant blending of presently accepted science with its application in common situations;
  - c) it discusses both the applications and limitations of the relevant scientific methodology;
  - d) it includes as a major component of the course the observation of natural phenomena coupled with the gathering of data and its quantitative analysis, and its interpretation in an expository format;
  - e) its overall focus is on guiding students towards the scientific literacy necessary for modern life rather than on training future science professionals.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Science** will be able to:

1. Explain what makes knowledge scientific, i.e., "...things and events in the universe occur in consistent patterns that are comprehensible through careful, systematic study." (AAAS)
2. Demonstrate the appreciation that scientific knowledge is subject to change as new observations and interpretations challenge current understanding.
3. Recognize that valid scientific information is durable, i.e., it is continually affirmed as new observations are made.
4. Perform scientific inquiry including aspects of the scientific method, such as observation, hypothesis, experiment, and evaluation. Note: Covered in laboratory science courses but not necessarily in applied science courses.

#### **3. College Composition and Writing Competency:**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least the three-credit course in **College Composition** and one writing-intensive course in the UMaine General Education broad area of **Demonstrated Writing Competency**. UMaine students will have taken [a minimum of 6 credits](#) in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**University of Maine General Education Definition for Writing-Intensive Course:** In a writing-intensive course: 1. students must have an opportunity to revise their writing in response to feedback from the instructor; 2. a substantial portion of the student's final grade must be based upon the quality of the written work, and 3. course enrollment should normally be limited to 25 students or less.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Demonstrated Writing Competency** will be able to:

1. Critique and revise their writing.
2. Achieve the intended purpose in the writing task, with awareness of audience.
3. Identify and fully develop ideas to a specific thesis.
4. Organize ideas effectively.
5. Adhere to proper mechanics and style.
6. Achieve clarity of expression in language, argument, rhetorical form, and idea.

#### **4. Quantitative Literacy (Math)**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least six credits in the UMaine General Education broad area of ***Quantitative Literacy (Math)***. UMaine students will have taken **a minimum of 6 credits** in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**University of Maine General Education Definition for Quantitative Literacy:** Quantitative literacy is the ability to formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information. Students will develop their quantitative literacy during their undergraduate experience through courses targeted at quantitative literacy and through frequent exposure to quantitative problems and analyses both inside and outside their major.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of general education study in **Quantitative Literacy**, students will understand the role that mathematics and quantitative thinking plays in solving and communicating information about real world problems and relationships. Students will be able to:

1. Translate problems from everyday spoken and written language to appropriate quantitative questions.
2. Interpret quantitative information from formulas, graphs, tables, schematics, simulations, and visualizations, and draw inferences from that information.
3. Solve problems using arithmetical, algebraic, geometrical, statistical, or computational methods.
4. Analyze answers to quantitative problems in order to determine reasonableness. Suggest alternative approaches if necessary.
5. Represent quantitative information symbolically, visually, and numerically.
6. Present quantitative results in context using everyday spoken and written language as well as using formulas, graphs, tables, schematics, simulations, and visualizations.

#### **5. Human Values and Social Contexts: Western Cultural Tradition and Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least one course in the UMaine General Education sub-category of ***Western Cultural Tradition*** and another course in the sub-category of ***Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives*** under the broad area of ***Human Values and Social Contexts***. UMaine students will have taken **a minimum of 3 credits in each of these areas (6 credits total)** in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**(A) University of Maine General Education Definition for *Western Cultural Tradition*:** Courses included in the UMaine Western Cultural Tradition category involve the historical and/or philosophical examination of the basis of Western culture. Subject areas may include, but are not limited to, artistic, economic, education, historical, legal, linguistic, literary, performative, philosophical, political, rhetorical, scientific, and social dimensions of the Western cultural tradition and its impact.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Western Cultural Tradition** will be able to:

1. Examine the sources, transmission, development and outcomes among ideas, institution, artifacts, and values within the traditions of the West.
2. Recognize and explore the complexity and variety among ideas, traditions, institutions, archaeological and historical texts and artifacts and values that inform the cultural traditions of the West.
3. Analyze and think critically about how societies are or have been defined by such cultural traditions.

#### **University of Maine Courses Fulfilling the Western Cultural Tradition Requirement:**

UMaine courses fulfilling the Western Cultural Tradition requirement are listed currently at:  
[http://catalog.umaine.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=58&poid=7422](http://catalog.umaine.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=58&poid=7422)

**(B) University of Maine General Education Definition for Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives:**

A course included in the UMaine Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives category satisfies one or more of the following criteria: (a) it places primary emphasis on the experiences, perspectives, and cultural work of one or more groups who are not dominant within a particular culture; (b) it has a primary goal encouraging students to become aware of the diversity of American culture and to discover their roles within that diversity; or (c) it places primary emphasis on the relationships among or within different cultures in the past or present; (d) it introduces students to a culture other than their own through an intermediate or advanced course in the language of that culture.

**UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Cultural Diversity or International Perspectives** will be able to do at least one of the following:

1. Recognize the experiences, perspectives, and cultural values of one or more groups who live within a culture different than their own.
2. Describe the diversity of American culture and reflect on their personal roles within that diversity.
3. Identify and assess how different cultures have related to each other either in the past or the present.
4. Achieve intermediate or advanced mastery of a language other than English.

**6. Human Values and Social Contexts: Population and the Environment**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least one course in the UMaine General Education sub-category of *Population and the Environment* under the broad area of *Human Values and Social Contexts*. UMaine students will have taken a minimum of 3 credits in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**University of Maine General Education Definition for Population and the Environment:** Courses included in the UMaine Population and Environment sub-category help students to understand how humankind interacts with our finite physical and biological environment. This understanding can be fostered in different ways. Some courses may emphasize technical, scientific problems and solutions. Others may focus on institutional, historical, and political dimensions, and others may focus on the cultural, ethical, and philosophical issues underlying current environmental problems. Courses fulfilling this requirement address at least one of the following:

1. the role of both local and global environmental change on the quality of human life;
2. the pervasive role of human population growth on environmental quality and the quality of life, both in industrial and developing countries;
3. the influence of historical, cultural, religious, economic, educational, and political factors on population growth and environmental quality;
4. the ethical and philosophical assumptions underlying environmental policies and thinking about nature and the place of humans in nature;
5. possible sustainable solutions to the population/environment problems.

**UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Population and the Environment** will be able to do at least one of the following:

1. Recognize and understand the role of both local and global environmental change on the quality of human life,
2. Describe the influence of diverse factors, such as philosophical, cultural, religious, economic, educational, and political, on population growth and environmental quality,
3. Understand the concepts and principles necessary to evaluate contemporary issues of population growth, natural resource conservation, and environmental protection,
4. Interpret diverse types of information about environmental issues, to develop their own perspectives on these issues, and to communicate these perspectives effectively,

5. Understand and describe technical and/or scientific approaches for addressing problems that arise in the relationship between human population and the environment.

### **7. Human Values and Social Contexts: Social Contexts**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least one course in the UMaine General Education sub-category of *Social Contexts and Institutions* under the broad area of *Human Values and Social Contexts*. UMaine students will have taken [a minimum of 3 credits](#) in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**University of Maine General Education Definition for Social Contexts and Institutions:** Courses included in the UMaine Social Contexts and Institutions sub-category focus upon the ways in which social contexts shape and limit human institutions (defined broadly to include customs and relationships as well as organizations). The specific focus may be upon ways in which social contacts and institutions interact with human values, the role of institutions in expressing cultural values, or the social and ethical dimensions attendant upon particular academic disciplines.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the general education area of **Social Contexts and Institutions** will be able to:

1. Identify, describe and analyze social contexts and human institutions
2. Recognize and critically evaluate the interaction between social contexts and human institutions

### **8. Ethics**

University of Maine students meeting the UMS General Education Transfer Block will have completed at least one course in the UMaine General Education broad area of *Ethics*. UMaine students will have taken [a minimum of 3 credits](#) in this area in order to qualify for the UMS General Education Transfer Block.

**University of Maine General Education Definition for Ethics:** Courses that satisfy the ethics requirement must have a theoretical component and have one or more of the following attributes:

- a) they teach methods of ethical analysis
- b) they deal intensively with ethical issues associated with a particular discipline or profession;
- c) they engage the student in the study of ethical questions arising through the interpretation of literature or history, or social scientific analysis designed to include ethical evaluation. In order for a course to be approved under this criterion, the treatment of ethics must be substantial rather than merely incidental.

#### **UMaine Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing the UMaine general education area of **Ethics** will be able to do one or more of the following:

1. Understand and describe main issues and concepts relevant to ethical theory.
2. Demonstrate their ability to work effectively with ethical issues and theories through their analysis and evaluation of the theoretical, literary, historical or artistic texts through which fundamental ethical ideas and problems are presented.
3. Critically evaluate the ethical ideas they are studying and apply these ideas to situations of everyday life.

### **III. Additional General Education Course Requirements required of Students from Any Other UMS Campus that Meet the UMS General Education Transfer Block**

A student at any other UMS campus that has completed the UMS General Education Transfer Block as certified by his or her originating campus may be required to complete the following additional General Education courses at the University of Maine to ensure that the education requirements imposed by the University of Maine have been met.

- (a) Human Values and Social Context – A minimum of 3 additional course credits in any of the UMaine Human Values and Social Context subcategory areas.

- (b) A Writing Intensive Course in the Major Degree
- (c) A Capstone Experience Course – Typically an explicit course defined by the major with a minimum of three credits.

#### **IV. Requirements Imposed by the Major Academic Degree**

In addition to the further General Education courses specified in Section III, an incoming transferring student may be required to take additional General Education courses required by the major. By example, even though 6 credits in Qualitative Literacy (Math) might transfer and count towards fulfilling the UMS General Education Transfer Block, the academic degree being pursued at the University of Maine might require one or more advanced or specific content math courses to meet the requirements of the major. Students should check on the transferability of specific courses into a major at the destination university by using the online course transfer system at <http://www.maine.edu/transfer-students/evaluate-my-transfer-credit-and-degree-progress/> This will help minimize the need to take additional general education courses after transfer.

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#### **Motion: University of Maine Faculty Senate Support of a University of Maine System General Education Transfer Block Process**

The University of Maine Faculty Senate hereby:

- (a) supports the UMS General Education Transfer Block as set forth in Section I of this document;
- (b) specifies in Section II of this document those UMaine courses that a UMaine student transferring to another UMS campus must complete in order to meet the minimum requirements of the UMS General Education Transfer Block (i.e. the University of Maine General Education *Transfer-Out Block*);
- (c) specifies in Section III of this document additional University of Maine General Education Course Requirements that students transferring from another UMS campus must additionally fulfill beyond the courses officially certified by the originating campus as fulfilling the UMS General Education Transfer Block;
- (d) explicitly recognizes in Section IV of this document that incoming transferring students that have met the UMS General Education Transfer Block may be required to take additional General Education courses required by an academic degree major, and
- (e) recognizes the authority of the faculty on all other UMS campuses to make similar curriculum matter determinations for their own campuses in a mutually supportive fashion in furthering the best interests of students on each and among the UMS campuses.