

General Policy – Revalidation for General Education

General Education Philosophy Statement:

Bismarck State College is dedicated to providing innovative educational programs that develop individual abilities, strengthen human relationships, enhance community life, and heighten global consciousness. The General Education (GenEd) requirements at Bismarck State College promote the development of an informed and educated person who recognizes and respects the diversity of communities; understands the value of active, critical thinking; and is competent and proficient at fundamental skills which encourage a positive attitude toward lifelong learning and equip students to participate in a complex, interdependent world.

What Makes a Course General Education:

How we teach a class can make a course a GenEd course. As instructors, we should be demonstrating that the methodologies presented in a general education course are transferable to many situations. GenEd serves students pursuing any discipline; as such, general education can be specific, but should be taught in a holistic way.

Specialized vs. General Education:

“Specialized and GenEd are complementary educational aims that generate the basic framework for undergraduate education.” (Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

- Specialized education is discipline-focused: it’s not GenEd.
- A GenEd course is one from where any student, regardless of major, can gain value.
- Instructional design of a course should support and incorporate an Institutional Essential Learning Outcomes (IELO): if it doesn’t, it’s not gen ed.

The Purpose of General Education Revalidation:

Courses approved as GenEd courses were initially granted that status by the GenEd committee, but instructors’ individual approaches to a course and even the course itself can change over time. Revalidation is meant to ensure that the course continues to actively develop the IELO identified as a core outcome; it is a quality control process focused on emphasizing student learning and general education goals. Furthermore, accreditation agencies (including the Higher Learning Commission, our accrediting body) are requiring this process. Thus, this procedure provides the quality assurance that accrediting agencies, other institutions, and our stakeholders expect.

Assessment:

The emphasis on student learning and meeting of GenEd goals is shown through the assessment process. When a course comes to the GenEd committee for revalidation, it is expected that assessment data from two semesters is provided. This data should be evaluated using the IELO rubric for the IELO (i.e., civic engagement, creative thinking, etc.) chosen for the course.

Data must be included from all sections of a course, including those taught by adjuncts. Courses with a co-requisite lab require only the lecture component to be assessed. If a course is strictly taught by adjunct faculty, when possible, the faculty should represent the course. When not possible, the faculty should work closely with the department chair so that the chair can represent the course.

Assessment Form:

<https://core.bismarckstate.edu/committee/fs/gecr/Shared%20Documents/Assessment%20Form.pdf>

Failure to submit proper assessment data will result in an automatic placement of the course on probation.

Probationary Period:

For courses failing to submit proper assessment data* or not revalidated for other reasons, the probationary period will last two years from the date of review. The Dean of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, department chair, and Institutional Assessment Coordinator will work with the faculty teaching the course to make course revisions, adjust IELOs, collect further assessment data, or something else deemed necessary. At the end of the probationary period, the information will be submitted to the GenEd committee, at which time the course will either be revalidated or removed as a GenEd course.

- All new courses are immediately placed on probationary status.
- Courses that are not revalidated may reapply for GenEd status once a champion is able to submit two semesters' worth of data after the second probationary year.

*If not revalidated because the course is simply not being taught, it shall remain in probationary status until a champion is able to submit two semesters' worth of data.

History of This Policy:

First policy draft January 3, 2018, approved by the Faculty Senate April 4, 2019, reviewed by the Operations Council on May 8, 2019 and approved by the Executive Council on May 24, 2019.