NJCC General Education
Guiding Principles for Affirming
Gen Ed Course Status

Introduction and Background

These guidelines result from discussions by the 2007-2008 New Jersey General Education Coordinating Committee. The task of the committee was to develop specific, objective criteria to evaluate community college General Education courses from the guidelines of the New Jersey General Education Foundation. Congruence with the "foundation" criteria is to be used as the dominant consideration in affirming, or not affirming, acceptance of submitted courses. The committee considered courses found to be compatible with the "foundation" criteria as being, in almost all cases, transferable to senior institutions. However, in the absence of a course by course guarantee of transferability, the priority in determining general education affirmation was based more on congruence with "foundation" criteria than with consideration of perceived transferability.

Some courses were affirmed as General Education in more than one category (e.g., Humanities and Diversity). Furthermore, some courses that were submitted for multiple General Education categories were only affirmed as General Education in a single category. In some cases, courses with similar or identical titles as approved General Education courses at some institutions were not approved for General Education at all institutions because the learning objectives were substantially different. In all categories, special studies/special topics courses were not affirmed as General Education as it is not possible to determine that all iterations of these courses meet the General Education guidelines for the category.

Individual Category Guidelines

1. **Communication** (Written and Oral Communication)
   a. This category is limited to these courses:
      - Composition I
      - Composition II
      - Speech, Public Speaking, or Human Communication
   b. No other courses fit the criteria for this category.
   c. Technical Writing courses satisfy this general education category for specialized associate degree (e.g., AAS, ADN, and AFA) programs only.
   d. Other mass communication, mass media, and communication courses do not satisfy this general education category.

2. **Mathematics** (Quantitative Knowledge and Skills)
   All college-level math courses that build on basic or elementary algebra satisfy this general education category. It is not sufficient for the course to require basic

or elementary algebra as a prerequisite; the course must use, and demonstrably build upon, algebraic principles.

3. **Science** (Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning)
    a. Any course whose <u>primary focus</u> is the scientific method and the exploration of scientific principles and theory satisfies this general education category.
    b. Generally these courses are biological sciences and physical sciences (chemistry and physics) courses.
    c. Sub-disciplines (e.g., astronomy, meteorology, forensics) may be acceptable as satisfying this general education category when they are physics- or chemistry-based.

4. **Technology** (Technological Competency)
    a. Technological Competency
       o Courses which include computer technology skills needed to access, process, and present information satisfy this general education category.
       o Courses cannot be limited to one application or programming language.

5. **Social Science** (Society and Human Behavior)
    a. Courses in anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology satisfy this category.
    b. The course concepts are viewed as <u>gateway concepts into a discipline</u>, as opposed to the notion of "introductory."
    c. "Introductory" is not viewed as being limited to concepts that are simple in their content.
    d. Given the "introductory" requirement, courses that require prerequisites, some 200-level courses, and courses that are "applied" are not considered as satisfying this general education category.(Applied courses are defined as those which are dependent on the theories and principles taught in the "introductory" courses and are not Gen Ed.)
    e. Three of the fields that comprise Anthropology (Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, and Physical Anthropology) are acceptable as satisfying this general education category provided they reference *culture* (as opposed to science).
    f. Introductions to the four fields of Political Science are acceptable as satisfying this general education category: American Government, International Relations, Comparative Government, and Political Theory.
    g. Psychology courses which satisfy this general education category include the following areas: psychology as a form of scientific inquiry, the biology of behavior, states of consciousness, learning, memory, cognition, motivation/emotion, life span, personality, and psychological disorders.
    h. Sociology courses which satisfy this general education category include courses whose primary focus is on the major sociological perspectives and the sociological imagination.

i. Discipline categories that do not satisfy this general education category include: Business, Communication, Criminal Justice, Education, Urban Studies, and Women's Studies.

6. **Humanities** (Humanistic Perspective)
The core criterion for all Humanities courses is that they meet the standard of "broad-based."
   a. **Appreciation of Art, Music, or Theater**
   In addition to "broad-based," a core criterion for courses in this subcategory is that the goal of appreciation is the primary purpose or focus.
   - *Appreciation of Art*
     - Aesthetic appreciation and history of art fulfill this general education category. (Note: An art history course satisfies Humanities general education under this Fine Art, Music or Theater category but not under the History category.)
     - Ethnic-based art is too specialized to satisfy this category of general education.
     - Courses which are predominantly studio arts are too skills-based to satisfy this category of general education. Courses which satisfy this general education category may have a studio component. However, that studio component should support the goal of appreciation and should not be the primary purpose or focus of the course.
     - Computer graphics courses do not fulfill this general education category.
     - Aesthetic appreciation and history of photography courses satisfy this general education category.
     - History of architecture does not satisfy this category.
   - *Appreciation and History of Music*
     - Music appreciation and music history courses satisfy this general education category. (Note: A music history course satisfies Humanities Gen Ed under this Art, Music or Theater category but not under the History category.)
     - Surveys of music genres as a reflection of a social or cultural era (e.g., Jazz, Pop) fulfill this general education category.
     - Music theory does not fulfill this general education category.
     - Performance courses which are predominantly skills-based do not satisfy this general education category.
   - *Appreciation of Theater*
     - Appreciation of the Performing Arts, including Dance, and Cinema courses are considered part of this subcategory of Humanities.
     - Appreciation and history courses fulfill this general education category. (Note: A theater history course satisfies Humanities Gen Ed under this Art, Music or Theater category but not under the History category.)

- o Performing Arts courses where the students are predominantly the performers are skills-based and therefore do not satisfy this general education category.
- o Specialized topics (e.g., African-American film, Latin American Lit in Film, Women in Film, Film and Pop Culture) do not satisfy this general education category.

b. Literature
- o Survey courses that study a genre satisfy this general education category (e.g., drama, fiction poetry, the novel).
- o Generally surveys of cultural or social groups do not satisfy this general education category.
- o Literature courses like American Literature, African-American Literature, Women's Literature, and Shakespeare, which can be vehicles for a broad-based examination of literature, satisfy this general education category.
- o The study of large geographical areas or major time periods (continents, civilizations, etc.) satisfies this general education category.
- o The study of non-survey courses (e.g., the Holocaust, AIDS, Vietnam, Puerto Rico, science fiction, and detective fiction) does not satisfy this general education category.
- o Special studies or special topics courses do not satisfy this general education category. (It is assumed that the content of these courses changes. Therefore, it is not possible to affirm that every iteration of these courses satisfies this general education category.)

c. Foreign Language (World Language)
- o All foreign language courses whose content is delivered in the target language satisfy this general education category.
- o American Sign Language satisfies this general education category.
- o Foreign language literature courses satisfy this general education category.
- o Foreign language literature courses in translation do not satisfy this general education category.
- o "Practical" Foreign Languages whose purpose appears to be to learn enough Berlitz-type "Foreign Language for travelers" do not fulfill this general education category.

d. History (as Humanities)
- o Courses affirmed in this category are the same as those affirmed in the Historical Perspective category (see below).

e. Philosophy and/or Religious Studies
- o *Philosophy*
    - o Courses that treat broad areas of philosophy (e.g., Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, Moral Choices, Critical

Thinking, and Logic) satisfy this general education category.

- o Business and professional ethics courses are too specific to fulfill this general education category but may satisfy the ethics requirement.
- o "Topics" courses are not sufficiently specific in their description to satisfy this general education category.
- o *Religious Studies*
  - o Courses that are broad in scope satisfy this general education category.
  - o Courses based on a single text (even if it is the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, or Qur'an) are too narrowly focused and do not satisfy this general education category.
- o

f. Interdisciplinary
- o This category is represented by courses that fulfill requirements in multiple disciplines within the humanities and satisfy the Humanities general education category.

g. Communication *(further review of this subcategory is pending)*

7. **History** (Historical Perspective)
The core criterion for all Historical Perspective courses is that they meet the standard of "broad-based."
- o Survey courses of a major time period or continent (Asia, Europe, and Africa) satisfy this general education category.
- o Courses that focus on a single ethnic, cultural, or social group are too specific to satisfy this general education category. (These courses may be accepted as satisfying the Global and Cultural Awareness category).
- o History courses like African-American History and Women in History, which can be vehicles for a broad-based examination of historical perspectives, satisfy this general education category.
- o Regional history is generally too specific and does not satisfy this general education category.
- o Special studies or special topics courses do not satisfy this general education category.

8. **Diversity** (Global and Cultural Awareness)
- o The primary purpose of these courses is the study of culturally diverse people.
- o Courses in this category support the examination of multicultural societies or peoples and help engender a richer understanding of the diverse life experiences of societal subgroups.
- o Diversity courses need not be "introductory" or "broad-based." Thus, course levels, specific discipline identity, prerequisites, and the "introductory" or "broad-based" criteria are not considered.
- o Societal groups are identified as – but are not limited to – race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, and religious orientation.

- o The absence of other criteria limits decision making to case-by-case analysis.
- o These courses may also be used to satisfy the requirements in the unassigned general education credit category for the AS and specialized associate degrees.

Integrated Goals Guidelines

These two goals, ethical reasoning and action and information literacy, will be integrated into select courses in each of the above general education categories.

Ethical Reasoning and Action
- o These courses include the study of the ethical implications of issues and situations.
- o Courses that integrate ethical reasoning and action must be included in each individual category. For example a philosophy course in ethics which integrates ethical reasoning and action may also satisfy the requirement in the Humanities - philosophy and/or religious studies category.

Information Literacy
- o These courses include the requirement for students to address an information need by locating, evaluating and effectively using information. These courses should underline the research process through the inclusion of information-based assignments that require students to:
    - Identify and address an information need;
    - Access information effectively and efficiently;
    - Evaluate and think critically about information;
    - Use information effectively for a specific purpose; and
    - Use information ethically and legally.
- o A specific breakdown of information literacy skills for the above learning outcomes can be located at: Information Literacy Progression Standards for NJ Colleges & Universities. Courses selected by individual institutions should focus on the Gateway/ Developing skills as identified in the Progression Standards.
- o Courses that integrate information literacy must be included in each individual category.

A General Education Foundation for
Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Specialized Associate, and Certificate Programs
in New Jersey's Community Colleges

(1997 Adoption, 2007 Reaffirmed, August 15, 2007 Revision)
APPROVED BY PRESIDENTS – 9/6/2011

General Education Goal(s) addressed								Course Categories (Goal Categories)	AA credits	AS credits	AAS, AFA AS Nursing credits	Certificate credits
1								**Communication** (Written and Oral Com.)	9	6	6	3
	2	3	4					**Mathematics – Science – Technology** **Mathematics 3-8 cr.** (Quant. Knlg. & Skills) **Science 3-8 cr.** (Sci. Knlg. & Rsng.) **Technological** Competency **0-4 cr.**	12	9	3	3
				5				**Social Science** (Society and Human Behavior)	6	3	3	3
					6			**Humanities** (Humanistic Perspective)	9	3	3	
						7		**History** (Historical Perspective)	6			
							8	**Diversity courses** (Global & Cult. Awns.)	3			
								Unassigned general education credit		6	8	
								General education foundation total	*45*	*30*	*20*	*6*

Gen. Ed. Foundation Course Categories	NJCC Goal Categories*	**Course Criteria:** Below are brief descriptions of the course criteria for satisfying the requirements. For fuller descriptions, see the **NJCC GE Course Criteria** (September 6, 2011).
1 **Communication**	1 Written and Oral Communication	An array of courses which prepare students to speak, read, and write effectively. At least two of these must be composition courses for A.A. and A.S. degrees. At least one of these must be a composition course for specialized degree programs and certificates.
2 **Mathematics**	2 Quantitative Knowledge and Skills	Any college level mathematics course including statistics, algebra, or calculus course(s). These courses should build upon a demonstrated proficiency in basic algebra.
3 **Science**	3 Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning	Any course(s) in the biological or physical sciences – including non-majors survey courses. At least one of these courses must have a laboratory component.
4 **Technology**	4 Technological Competency	Any course that emphasizes common computer technology skills (e.g. computer science, information technology) that helps students to access, process, and present information. This component is not required for students who can demonstrate competency.
5 **Social Science**	5 Society and Human Behavior	Any introductory course(s) from among anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, or sociology.
6 **Humanities**	6 Humanistic Perspective	Any broad-based course(s) in the appreciation of art, music, or theater; literature; foreign language; history; philosophy and/or religious studies.
7 **History**	7 Historical Perspective	Any broad-based course(s) or sequence of courses in World, Western, non-Western, or American History.
8 **Diversity courses**	8 Global and Cultural Awareness	Any course whose primary purpose is to expose students to a multicultural society or people, possibly within the context of non-introductory study of a foreign language. If this goal is integrated into one or more general education course(s), the three credits may be moved from this category to another general education category.
General Education Integrated Course Goal		**Course Criteria:** Below are brief descriptions of the course criteria for satisfying the requirements. For fuller descriptions, see the **NJCC GE Course Criteria**
Ethical Reasoning and Action		This ethical reasoning and action goal may be infused in any of the above categories. These courses should include the ethical implications of issues and situations.
Information Literacy		These courses include the requirement for students to address an information need by locating, evaluating and effectively using information.

Note: This document should be used in conjunction with the **NJCC GE Learning Goals & Suggested Individual College-Wide Learning Obj.** (9-6-2011).

Programs	**Allocation Notes:** The credit allocation below is consistent with the 1997 NJCC Gen. Ed. Foundation grid.
AA	The Associate in Arts (AA) program requires a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of general education coursework from among the indicated categories.
AS	The Associate in Science (AS) program requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours from among the indicated categories, with minimum distributions as shown. Beyond these minimums, any 30-credit subset of the AA program credit distribution will be accepted. General education coursework in excess of the 24 credits listed should follow the AA distribution limits.
Specialized Associate AAS, AFA, & AS Nursing	The specialized associate degrees shall include Applied Associate in Science (AAS), Associate in Fine Arts (AFA), and AS in Nursing. These programs shall require no fewer than 20 semester credit hours of General Education. Notwithstanding any articulation agreements, the general education courses should support career preparation. General education coursework in excess of the 12 credits listed should follow the AS distribution limits.

Certificate	The Certificate (or Academic Certificate) shall prepare students to read and write effectively. At least one other general education course is required. The Certificate of Achievement (COA) requires no general education courses beyond those that support career education. The Certificate of Completion (COC) is a noncredit certification program, which is not applicable within the general education context.

NJCC General Education
Learning Goals and Suggested Individual College-Wide Learning Objectives
(1997 Adopted, August 15, 2007 Revision, September 6, 2011 Revision)

New Jersey Community College General Education Philosophy: Students are empowered to meet twenty-first century challenges through learning processes that lead to knowledge acquisition, skills mastery, critical thinking, and the exercise of personal, social, and civic responsibilities.

The Colleges maintain responsibility for offering a general education program whose learning objectives facilitate attainment of all **NJCC Gen Ed Learning Goals**. Course-level learning objectives must be consistent with the **Individual College-Wide Learning Objectives** that fulfill the **NJCC Gen Ed Learning Goals**. (Local general education courses must also be consistent with **NJCC GE Course Criteria** for satisfying requirements.)

NJCC Goal Categories (Course Category)	NJCC Gen. Ed. Learning Goals Critical thinking is embedded	Suggested Individual College-Wide Learning Objectives: Colleges have discretion in the establishment of Individual College-Wide Learning Objectives that support the achievement of the NJCC Learning Goals. The following is a list of examples.
1 **Written and Oral Communication** (Communication)	Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.	a. Students will explain and evaluate what they read, hear, and see. b. Students will state and evaluate the views and findings of others. c. Students will logically and persuasively state and support orally and in writing their points of view or findings. d. Students will evaluate, revise, and edit their communication.
2 **Quantitative Knowledge and Skills** (Mathematics)	Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.	a. Students will translate quantifiable problems into mathematical terms and solve these problems using mathematical or statistical operations. b. Students will construct graphs and charts, interpret them, and draw appropriate conclusions.
3 **Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning** (Science)	Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.	a. Applying the scientific method, students will analyze a problem and draw conclusions from data and evidence. b. Students will distinguish between scientific theory and scientific discovery, and between science and its scientific technological applications, and they will explain the impact of each on society.
4 **Technological Competency** (Technology)	Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.	a. Students will use computer systems and/or other appropriate forms of technology to present information. b. Students will use appropriate forms of technology to identify, collect, and process information.
5 **Society and Human Behavior** (Social Science)	Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.	a. Students will analyze and discuss behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science perspective. b. Students will explain how social institutions and organizations influence individual behavior. c. Students will describe and demonstrate how social scientists gather and analyze data and draw conclusions. d. Students will apply civic knowledge both locally and globally and engage in activities that exercise personal, social, and civic responsibility.
6 **Humanistic Perspective** (Humanities)	Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; and philosophy and/or religious studies; and will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.	a. Students will describe commonly used approaches and criteria for analyzing works*. b. Students will analyze works* and applying commonly used approaches and criteria. c. Students will demonstrate a value added competence in the production and comprehension of a foreign language. * in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies and possibly within the context of studying and using a language other than English.
7 **Historical Perspective** (History)	Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.	a. Students will state the causes of a major historical event and analyze the impact of that event on a nation or civilization. b. Students will discuss a major idea, movement, invention or discovery, and how it affected the world or American society. c. Students will demonstrate how writers' interpretations of historical events are influenced by their time, culture, and perspective.
8 **Global and Cultural Awareness** (Diversity courses)	Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.	a. Students will link cultural practices and perspectives with geographic and/or historical conditions from which they arose. b. Students will explain why an understanding of differences in people's backgrounds is particularly important to American society. c. Students will recognize and explain the possible consequences of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions. d. Students will recognize and assess the contributions and impact of people from various nations and/or cultures.

NJ CCC Integrated Goals		
Ethical Reasoning and Action	Students will understand ethical issues and situations.	a. Students will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives on an ethical issue or a situation. b. Students will take a position on an ethical issue or a situation and defend it.
Information Literacy	Students will address an information need by locating, evaluating and effectively using information.	a. Students will identify and address an information need. b. Students will access information effectively and efficiently. c. Students will evaluate and think critically about information. d. Students will use information effectively for a specific purpose. e. Students will use information ethically and legally.
Note: This document should be used in conjunction with the **General Education Foundation** (9- 6- 2011) and the **NJCC GE Course Criteria** (9-6- 2011).		

NJCC General Education
Course Criteria In Summary
for Satisfying the NJCC Gen Ed Foundation

(September 6, 2011 Edition)

New Jersey Community College Educational Philosophy: Students are empowered to meet twenty-first century challenges by achieving learning that involves knowledge acquisition, skills mastery, critical thinking, and the exercise of personal, social, and civic responsibilities.

NJCC Goal Categories (Course Category)	NJCC Learning Goals*	**Course Criteria:** These criteria for satisfying requirements are consistent with 1997 NJCC Gen. Ed. Foundation. Neither this nor preceding updates have modified the NJCC Gen. Ed. Foundation and their course criteria.**
1 **Written and Oral Communication** (Communication)	Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.	An array of courses which prepare students to speak, read, and write effectively. At least two of these must be composition courses for A.A. and A.S. degrees. At least one of these must be a composition course for other programs and certificates. This category is typically limited to courses such as English Composition I, English Composition II, and a Speech / Human Communications course.
2 **Quantitative Knowledge and Skills** (Mathematics)	Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.	Any college level mathematics course including statistics, algebra, or calculus course(s). These courses should build upon a demonstrated proficiency in basic algebra. Students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in basic algebra as part of the AA and AS degrees. Institutions are free to determine a basic algebra proficiency requirement for specialized associate degrees and certificates on an individual basis.
3 **Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning** (Science)	Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.	Any course[s] in the biological or physical sciences for science majors. Survey courses in biology, chemistry, and physics fulfill this requirement for non-science majors. At least one of the courses taken must have a laboratory component.
4 **Technological Competency** (Technology)	Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.	Any course that emphasizes common computer technology skills (e.g. computer science, information technology) that helps students access, process, and present information. This component is not required for students who can demonstrate competency.
5 **Society and Human Behavior** (Social Science)	Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.	Any introductory course(s) from among anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, or sociology. Typically this category is limited to broad-based courses.
6 **Humanistic Perspective** (Humanities)	Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; and philosophy and/or religious studies; and will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.	Any broad-based course[s] in the appreciation of art, music, or theater; literature; foreign language; history; philosophy and/or religious studies. This category may include any broad-based course which is fundamentally the appreciation of a performing or a creative art. Typically studio arts courses, both performing and creative, involve predominately performance and creation, and therefore do not satisfy this requirement. This category also includes any broad-based course which is fundamentally a literature course. Typically journalism, creative writing, and other specialized writing courses involve predominately writing, and therefore do not satisfy this requirement.
7 **Historical Perspective** (History)	Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.	Any broad-based course(s) or sequence of courses in World, Western, non-Western, or American History.

8 **Global and Cultural Awareness** (Diversity courses)	Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and cultural diverse peoples.	Any course whose primary purpose is to expose students to a multicultural society or people possibly within the context of non-introductory study of a foreign language. If this goal is integrated into one or more general education course(s), the three credits may be moved from this category to another general education category.
NJ CCC Integrated Goals		
Ethical Reasoning and Action	Students will understand ethical issues and situations.	These courses in each category include the ethical implications of issues and situations. This ethical reasoning and action goal may be infused in any of the above categories.
Information Literacy	Students will address an information need by locating, evaluating and effectively using information.	These courses in each category underline the research process through the inclusion of information-based assignments.
* The Colleges maintain responsibility for offering a general education program whose learning objectives facilitate attainment of all **NJCC Learning Goals**. Local general education courses must be consistent with **NJCC Course Criteria** for satisfying requirements**.** (Course-level learning objectives must also be consistent with the **Individual College-wide Learning Objectives** that fulfill the **NJCC Gen Ed Learning Goals**.)		
** The NJ Academic Officers Association has the responsibility of affirming individual course classifications approved by institutions based upon the **NJCC General Education Learning Goals** and the **NJCC General Education Course Criteria for Satisfying the NJCC Gen Ed Foundation**.		
Note: This document should be used in conjunction with the **General Education Foundation** (September 6, 2011) and the **NJCC GE Learning Goal & Suggested Individual College-wide Learning Objectives** (September 6, 2011).		