

CLE COURSE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

As a vital component of undergraduate education at Virginia Tech, the Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE)--required of all undergraduates--empowers our students with a broad base of knowledge and transferable skills. Liberal Education provides students the opportunity for rigorous intellectual encounters with enduring human challenges and important contemporary problems, through wide-ranging exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing.
(<http://www.cle.prov.vt.edu/purpose.html>)

Faculty wishing to propose the inclusion of a course in the Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE) should carefully review the goals of the CLE and the guidelines below. The Proposal Review Committee is available to answer questions and assist with drafts. Please contact the chair of the University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education (UCCLE) for information. (See contact information at <http://www.cle.prov.vt.edu/uccle/membership.html>)

This document includes the following information:

- I. Determining the Appropriateness of a Course for the CLE
- II. Proposal Preparation, Submission, and Review
- III. Proposal Checklist
- IV. Proposal Coversheet
- V. Learning Goals by Area

I. Determining the Appropriateness of a Course for the CLE

To be considered for the CLE, a course must meet various criteria.

Status of the course. The course must be an official course, fully approved through all levels of faculty governance. Proposal authors and members of the UCCLE may discuss courses still in the approval process, and approval by the UCCLE may even be expedited once a course is approved. However, proposals will not be accepted until the course is formally approved.

Level and accessibility of the course. For the most part, courses approved for the CLE will be at the 1000, 2000, and (to a lesser extent) 3000 level. These courses will generally be available to students across disciplines and will not require prerequisites.

If a prerequisite exists, there should be no more than one prerequisite, and that course should also be a CLE course.

The UCCLE recognizes that some 4000 level courses are appropriate to CLE. That is, they may require the depth of thought and perspective more common to upper-level students. Because the CLE emphasizes a broad range of knowledge and skills, such courses should be designed for and accessible to students in more than one discipline, not as a way of addressing senior-level depth of content in a major. For example, a CLE capstone course might be offered so that students might integrate the study of content and the practice of competencies they have developed through their work in the CLE.

The course should be offered on a regular basis and should be accessible to students outside the related major.

Faculty. CLE courses will generally be taught by instructors and professors. If a course is to be staffed by graduate teaching assistants, they should be working with the guidance and supervision of instructors and/or professors.

Faculty teaching in the CLE might participate in faculty development activities in conjunction with CLE courses, such as those provided by the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

CLE Goals. A course submitted to the CLE should contribute to the educational mission of the CLE, which fosters and develops the following competencies:

- intellectual curiosity and critical thinking
- strong analytic, communication, quantitative, and information literacy skills
- the capacity for collaboration and creative problem solving
- the ability to synthesize and transfer knowledge
- intercultural knowledge and understanding
- ethical reasoning and action

The CLE seeks to create the conditions for growing creative and intellectual engagement; civic, personal, and social responsibility; and lifelong learning.

While departments may seek CLE status for a course because the department hopes to attract majors or to provide courses for majors, those goals are not sufficient and may even work against the broad goals of the CLE.

For a full discussion of the CLE goals and purpose, please see www.cle.prov.vt.edu

Area Goals. A course will be designated to meet the learning goals of one area of the CLE. The learning goals for that area indicate the focus of the courses in that area. Area V courses must meet all goals of that area. In other areas, courses must meet a significant number of the goals.

In rare cases, a course may be approved to meet the goals of two areas; in those cases, students may choose the area in which the course will count. One course will not be approved to meet the requirements of two areas at once.

Classroom Engagement and Interaction. The course should include strategies for engagement designed to foster student learning. While formal (graded) assignments--such as tests, research papers, or speeches--might allow students to demonstrate mastery of course materials, the UCCLC expects that CLE courses would also provide opportunities for students to process information and to make personal meaning.

Although CLE courses might differ in class size, students in any CLE class should benefit from interaction with peers and/or the instructor in any number of ways. Strategies for active learning might include any of the following:

- Informal (non-graded) writing or speaking
- Contributions to a discussion board
- Class discussion
- Group work

Courses in the CLE should include strategies appropriate for the class size. For example, if the class is designed as a large lecture, faculty might make use of the discussion board on Blackboard or clickers that record student responses to discussion questions in class. Mid-size classes might include informal writing or one-page reaction papers. Smaller classes might include class discussion, group work or informal presentations of concepts or ideas for application.

II. Proposal Preparation, Submission, and Review

Proposal Preparation. Departments submitting proposals for existing courses seeking inclusion in the CLE should prepare the following:

- Cover Sheet for Existing Courses Seeking Inclusion in the CLE
- Proposal memo (see below)
- Course proposal as previously approved

In addition to the material listed above, it may be helpful to include as attachments some sample syllabi or course contracts indicating how the course has been taught; such supporting information, when provided, has proved to be of great assistance to the UCCLC committee in determining the appropriateness of the course for the CLE.

Proposal Memo. A memo to the UCCLC should address the criteria for CLE courses:

1. Logistics of course offering
 - a. Status as approved course
 - When was the course approved by CUSP? (Attach approved proposal.)
 - How often has it been taught in your department?
 - b. Level and accessibility
 - If the course is not 1000 or 2000 level, why should it be included in the CLE?
 - Address the issue of any prerequisites.
 - Will the course be accessible for non-majors?
 - What is the proposed class size?
 - How often will the course be taught?
 - c. Faculty
 - Who will teach this course? Faculty rank?
 - How will GTAs be trained and supervised?
2. CLE goals –
 - a. How does the course fit with the overall mission of the CLE?
 - b. Area learning goals
 - List each goal of the appropriate area and explain how the course meets that goal.
 - If the course doesn't meet a particular goal, indicate that the goal is not applicable.
3. Classroom engagement and interaction
 - How will class size affect the way the course is taught?
 - What role will student-to-student and student-teacher and/or student-student interaction play in the course, and how will it be facilitated?
 - How will students be actively engaged in learning the course content?

Proposal Submission. Send electronic copy to the UCCLC via the recording secretary. See <http://www.cle.prov.vt.edu/uccle/membership.html>.

For online submission information, see <http://www.cle.prov.vt.edu/>

Proposal Review. Once a proposal is received, the recording secretary to the UCCLC will check to be sure that the proposal is complete. The proposal author will be contacted if the proposal is incomplete so that the proposal can be completed before presentation to the UCCLC.

Completed proposals will be made available to the UCCLC. The members of the Proposal Review Subcommittee will review the proposal and make recommendations to the committee. Proposals are given two readings with a final decision being made by a vote of the full University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education.

Since the committee meets monthly during the academic year, this process will take a minimum of two months. Proposal authors and Department Heads will be informed of the Committee's decision.

Proposal Checklist

I. Cover sheet

Completed with required signatures (form available on following page)

II. Proposal memo

A. Logistics of course offering

Status as approved course

- When was the course approved by CUSP?
- How long has it been taught in your department?

Level and accessibility

- If the course is not 1000 or 2000 level, why should it be included in the CLE?
- Address the issue of any prerequisites.
- What is the likelihood that a non-major can take this course?
- What is the proposed class size?
- How often will the course be taught?

Faculty

- Who will teach this course? Faculty rank?
- How will GTAs be trained and supervised?

B. CLE goals

Mission of CLE -- How does the course fit with the overall mission of the CLE?

Area learning goals -- Explanation of ways the course meets a significant number of learning goals in an area

C. Classroom engagement and interaction

- How will class size affect the way the course is taught?
- Explanation of student-to-student and student-teacher and/or student-student interaction
- How will students be actively engaged in learning the course content?

III. Course proposal

Original Course proposal as approved by CUSP -- attached

**Cover Sheet for Existing Courses Seeking Inclusion
in the Curriculum for Liberal Education**

Proposing Department: _____

Approved course number and title: _____

Area of the CLE appropriate for course: _____

Proposal Author and Contact Info: _____

Signatures: This page must be signed by the Department Head of the Proposing Department, and by the Dean of the College in which the proposing Department is housed. These signatures indicate that the Department Head and Dean approve of the proposal. The Dean's signature, in particular, indicates that the College has the necessary resources to support the inclusion of the course in the Curriculum for Liberal Education. The CLE offers no guarantee of funding to support CLE courses.

The attached proposal has my approval.

(Signature of proposing Department Head)

(Printed/typed name of proposing Department Head)

(Date)

The attached proposal has my approval.

(Signature of College Dean)

(Printed/typed name of College Dean)

(College)

(Date)

CLE Learning Goals by Area

(Please see -- <http://www.cle.prov.vt.edu/guides/>)

Area 1 Learning Goals -- Writing and Discourse

1. Understand the use of words as basic tools of thought.
2. Engage in defining, developing, and understanding ideas through the process of writing.
3. Understand modes of verbal discourse that are central to college-level academic work, such as argument, interpretation, analysis, and metaphor.
4. Develop clear and effective prose through attention to style, grammar, and other elements of composition.
5. Engage in planning, inventing, editing, and revising as elements of the writing process.
6. Read texts and write analytical and interpretive prose as a reciprocal means of expanding powers of understanding and imagination.
7. Participate in verbal discussion of texts and ideas as an essential element of discourse and communication.

Area 2 Learning Goals -- Ideas, Cultural Traditions, and Values

1. Examine some of the formative ideas and cultural traditions that have shaped Western experience.
2. Study classic and contemporary texts that have influenced or exemplified currents in Western thought and imagination.
3. Gain an understanding of some aspects of human achievement and experience that have been persistently overlooked in mainstream Western culture, including those of women, minorities, and non-Western peoples.
4. Analyze creative works of various mediums both in the arts and technology from the viewpoints of cultural meanings and influence.
5. Gain acquaintance with historical traditions and with humanistic methods of studying and interpreting them.
6. Consider the contributions of philosophical, ethical, or religious systems to human life.
7. Recognize how the interaction of tradition and innovation nourishes both individuality and community.
8. Gain critical and appreciative perspective upon one's own culture by studying other historical periods and other cultural traditions.
9. Study the life, thought, and creative activity of men and women of achievement in various fields of human endeavor.

Area 3 Learning Goals -- Society and Human Behavior

1. Examine distinctive quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry appropriate to the scientific study of societal institutions, patterns of culture, and human behavior.
2. Understand specific patterns and processes that affect the organization of society and the relationship between the individual and society.
3. Investigate institutions, systems, and ideologies in the realms of government, family, community, economy, education, science, religion, and other dimensions of culture.
4. Investigate human psychological and developmental processes through quantitative and qualitative methodologies.
5. Compare alternative theories about human society, culture, and behavior.
6. Examine patterns that involve inclusion and exclusion pertaining to race, class, community, gender and ethnic identity, and other forms of social grouping.

Area 4 Learning Goals -- Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

1. Describe the methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge and be able to distinguish science from pseudoscience.
2. Evaluate the credibility of, use, and misuse of scientific information.
3. Recognize how science is self-correcting through formulation of hypotheses, testing of these hypotheses by carefully designed experiment or by observation, and by appropriate modification of hypotheses.
4. Given a theory or model, make predictions about the results of an experiment or observational study, observe the outcomes, and compare the predictions with the outcomes. Recognize how to reason scientifically, how to make appropriate assumptions, and how to use scientific methods and tools to solve basic problems within natural science.
5. Organize scientific information and data into trends and patterns using spatial, graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to sort, analyze, and interpret natural phenomena.
6. Communicate effectively the results of a set of scientific experiments or observations.
7. Provide examples of the interdependence between social or ethical issues and developments in science and technology.
8. Give examples of the roles of diverse individuals and approaches in advancing scientific knowledge.

Area 5 Learning Goals -- Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning

1. Increase basic competence in quantitative reasoning and problem solving, starting at an appropriate entry level.
2. Understand some fundamental principles of reasoning that are involved in mathematics or logic.
3. Understand quantitative and symbolic reasoning through the study of significant applications of mathematical sciences.

Area 6 Learning Goals -- Creativity and Aesthetic Experience

1. Participate in cultural events and activities on campus, in both popular and classical arts.
2. Understand how the artists or designers who produce these events and works have shaped their ideas.
3. Examine intuitive and metaphorical thought processes and their relationship to the human imagination and other intellectual abilities.
4. Explore the interaction of art and society, including the contributions of diverse groups to cultural life, such as women and members of minority groups.
5. Study selected classic works of fine and applied arts.
6. Participate in interpretive discussions, lectures, and demonstrations led by artists, designers, architects, musicians, and/or performers.
7. Explore connections between the arts and other forms of design and creativity.

Area 7 Learning Goals -- Critical Issues in a Global Context

Goals 1-4 apply to all courses in Area 7. The remaining goals will be addressed to varying degrees, depending on the content of the course.

1. Examine an issue or a group of related issues whose influence on contemporary life extends beyond the boundaries of the United States and significantly involves other societies, cultures, and geographical locations.

2. Develop an informed understanding of the context of the critical issues under study, including relevant historical, technological, cultural, and/or scientific factors.
3. Learn how to interpret and evaluate controversial issues of the day from several distinctive and differing points of view, using appropriate information from varied sources.
4. Relate contemporary events at home and abroad to the subject matter of the course
5. Gain an informed understanding of the crucial national and international role played by technology with respect to selected critical issues.
6. Examine the root causes and influences of such dynamics as racism, ethnic prejudice, sexism, and other forms of social exclusion.
7. Develop an understanding of the culture, the state of technological and economic development, and the values of a particular society or people outside the United States.
8. Examine the role of ethical thinking and action in relation to issues in such areas as technological development, political policy, the environment, and social and economic patterns.