

# UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT GUIDELINES COMMON CURRICULUM FOR LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP<sup>1</sup>

## Goals of the Common Curriculum<sup>2</sup>

The Common Curriculum provides academic breadth with a set of intellectually rigorous and challenging courses that foster skills and attributes associated with leadership and global citizenship. A leader and global citizen needs to be able to listen, speak, and cultivate compassion with those outside their own majors, disciplines, professions, communities, and cultures and to make connections between their own livelihoods and expertise and the experiences and knowledge of others. The purpose of the Common Curriculum is to ensure that all University of Connecticut undergraduate students are literate in different ways of knowing and many kinds of knowledge beyond career preparation, and they enter society and their professions with a strong sense of moral, ethical, and social responsibility. Ideally, the Common Curriculum does not stand alone but instead provides a foundation for future learning of students in their majors and future careers. It is vital to the University's mission that a balance between professional and general education be established and maintained in which each is complementary to and compatible with the other.

The Common Curriculum prepares students to tackle 21st-century challenges by allowing them to combine coursework across a variety of disciplines to expand their worldviews, enhance their range of skills, and develop into critical, creative, emotionally intelligent, and interdisciplinary thinkers. The program also allows them to dive deeper into areas of interest outside of their majors. The Curriculum is designed to help students learn how to learn and to

- Be versatile in a rapidly changing world;
- Combine knowledge in innovative ways;
- Apply learning strategies to new contexts, including their major;
- See local and global patterns and the interconnectedness of intellectual work; and,
- Appreciate how we need each other to tackle today's challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> The University C and C is still not sure that "Common Curriculum" is the right title. We would like to move away from "General Education" (which carries a lot of baggage). "Core Curriculum" typically refers to a set of specific, shared courses that all students take. We settled for Common Curriculum for the time being.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education of 1985, the Task Force on General Education Report of 2000, the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee Report of May 2001, and the Delta Task Force Report 2021.

There are a number of ways to impact teaching and learning to address the above-mentioned goals, including service learning, capstone courses, collaborative projects, first-year experiences, internships, and undergraduate research, among others. The Common Curriculum comprises life-

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transforming immersion in six Topics of Inquiry and five Competencies: quantitative skills, second language proficiency, and writing, as well as two additional competencies – Information, Digital, and Media Literacy and/or Dialogue. Information, Digital, and Media Literacy, and Dialogue are intentionally and systematically infused throughout the Curriculum. Guidelines for the Common Curriculum are presented in three parts:

- A. The Common Curriculum Requirements:
  - 1. Topics of Inquiry
  - 2. Competencies
  - 3. Principles for the Common Curriculum
- B. Oversight
- C. Criteria for Specific Topics of Inquiry and Competencies

## **PART A: The Common Curriculum Requirements**

While traditional approaches to general education have often reified disciplines as central to curriculum design, UConn's vision of general education centers inter-, cross-, and transdisciplinary fields of inquiry. Many pressing problems require interdisciplinary thinking, and introducing students to contemporary, complex problems early in their college careers is crucial in preparing them to be active and productive citizens. Interdisciplinary study also emphasizes multiple perspectives, which can result in an increased sensitivity to bias, critical thinking, appreciation of ethical concerns, and tolerance of ambiguity. The UConn vision also honors the broad spectrum of ways of knowing and inquiring that are used across fields of study.

Connections among the courses used in general education have been shown to foster deeper engagement and more meaningful learning, depth, and coherency that students crave. When courses fit together to tell a larger story across disciplines, students gain a better understanding of why they are asked to learn the material. Interdisciplinary studies across a common theme also challenge students to think critically about reconciling differing points of view and to approach a complex problem from more than one perspective or skill-set. Additionally, a predefined listing of courses supporting common themes helps to narrow the ambitious curriculum down to a meaningful, curated pathway through the seemingly infinite sea of possibilities.

UConn's vision of general education is organized around six topics of inquiry which are described in detail in Part C and the five competencies, which are described in detail in the Appendix.

### **PART A - 1: Topics of Inquiry**

**There are six topics of inquiry:**

- TOI-1: Creativity: Design, Expression, Innovation
- TOI-2: Cultural Dimensions of Human Experiences
- TOI-3: Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice
- TOI-4: Environmental Literacy
- TOI-5: Individual Values and Social Institutions
- TOI-6: Science and Empirical Inquiry

#### **Topic of Inquiry Operating Principles**

1. Students must pass at least a total of 21 credits in the Topics of Inquiry.
2. Students must pass at least three credits of coursework in each of six Topics of Inquiry. Topics of Inquiry courses may be counted toward the major.
3. The courses fulfilling the Topics of Inquiry must represent at least six different subjects as designated by subject code (e.g., ANTH or WGSS) and at least one course must be

passed in each Topic of Inquiry (some courses fulfill two). Exceptions to this rule are subject heading designations that group interdisciplinary studies through cross-listing, such as LLAS, AFRA, WGSS, AAAS, URBN, ENV5, EVST, HRTS, UNIV, and INTD. Other current and future interdisciplinary groups would also apply.

4. TOI courses may only have TOI courses as prerequisites and corequisites, with three exceptions: (a) Honors courses may require Honors student status, and (b) TOI-6 courses and Writing Competency courses may have prerequisites and corequisites that are not Common Curriculum courses.
5. Students must take at least three Common Curriculum courses in one Focus Area. Topics of Inquiry are by default eligible to serve as a Focus Area, but other Focus Areas may be proposed by a group of faculty and approved by GEOC to fulfill this requirement. For example, faculty may design a Theme that spans multiple disciplines. **Themes are recommended but not required.**
6. To satisfy the Focus requirement, a student must fulfill at least three courses in a single Topic of Inquiry or all requirements of at least one Theme.
7. Up to three credits of repeatable one-credit courses may be included in the Topics of Inquiry. No more than six credits with the UNIV or INTD prefix may be elected by any student to meet the Common Curriculum Requirements.
8. Students must complete at least one laboratory course in TOI-6 (see TOI-6 for definition of laboratory class). This does not restrict courses outside TOI-6 from having laboratories, nor does it limit TOI-6 courses to be only laboratory courses.

## **PART A – 2: Competencies**

The Common Curriculum includes competencies in quantitative skills, second language proficiency, and writing (see Appendix for definitions, learning objectives, and entry/exit criteria for these). In addition, two additional competencies—Information, Digital, and Media Literacy and Dialogue--are infused across the Common Curriculum with these objectives for each TOI:

1. *Quantitative Literacy* is established by completing two courses that are designated for this purpose as Q courses. One Q course must be a MATH or STAT course.
2. *Second-language competency* is established by passing either 1) the third-year high school level course in a language other than English or 2) the second-semester course in the first-year sequence of college-level study in a language other than English.
3. *Writing competency* is established by passing two courses that are designated for this purpose as W courses, one of which must be approved for use in the major field of study at the 2000-level or above. First-year writing courses are prerequisites for W courses.

4. *Information, Digital, and Media Literacy* (IDML) will be infused throughout the Core Curriculum and embedded in each of the TOIs. IDML educates students in the rhetorical and intercultural dimensions of media, both as consumers and creators. IDML also educates students in the discourses and information ecosystems of the disciplines in which they are learning, preparing them for their professional and civic lives in an increasingly interconnected world. Basic information literacy is taught to all first-year students as an integral part of [ENGL 1007/1010/1011](#), in collaboration with the staff of the University Libraries. In addition, each major program has considered the information literacy competencies required of its graduates and built those expectations into the upper-level research and writing requirements in the major. In the same spirit, appropriate expectations for information, digital, and media literacy will be woven into all Common Curriculum courses.
5. *Dialogue* will be infused throughout the Core Curriculum. To prepare students adequately for leadership and global citizenship, we provide opportunities to experience, learn, practice, and integrate dialogue as a core component of their higher education. Dialogue is a foundational competency that is necessary to all fields of knowledge and essential to individual and social development. Among these core competencies, dialogue is necessarily collaborative and deeply relational, making it an essential competency for democratic life.

### **PART A – 3: Principles for the Core Curriculum**

The Core Curriculum should entail a breadth of academic experience for all students, while at the same time providing an intellectually rigorous and challenging set of courses. The following principles should support any effort in general education:

1. *Universality*. All students at the University of Connecticut should have the same minimum University Common Curriculum Requirements irrespective of their major, School, or College. Schools and Colleges may prescribe options from approved courses within a Topic Area for a student to fulfill the University Common Curriculum Requirements. Each department or School and College may propose courses for any of the six Topics of Inquiry. All courses approved for the Common Curriculum Requirements must be valid for all Schools and Colleges of the University of Connecticut in meeting the University Common Curriculum Requirements. This in no way inhibits the various Schools, Colleges, departments, or programs from setting up additional internal requirements, and allows for courses to be used by a student to simultaneously satisfy University Common Curriculum Requirements and requirements for the School, College, and/or major.
2. *Accessibility*. All students at the University of Connecticut should have timely access to Common Curriculum courses and support services. Whenever possible, class sizes should be limited to permit direct interactions between students and faculty.

3. *Transferability.* Students must be able to transfer from one School or College to another without having to repeat Common Curriculum Requirements. Transfer Admissions, in consultation with GEOC when applicable, is tasked with managing the smooth transition of students who transfer into the University from other institutions.
4. *Faculty Participation.* Common Curriculum courses should be taught by faculty, and resources should be allocated to promote this practice. Whenever possible, class sizes should be limited to permit direct interactions between students and faculty.

### **PART B: Oversight**

The curriculum in degree programs remains vibrant and alive because faculty members constantly attend to it. They debate what is essential and what is optional to a degree program; they assess how the character of individual courses contributes to the whole; they consider whether courses are properly sequenced relative to one another. If a Common Curriculum is to avoid almost instant ossification, it requires a similar level of faculty involvement and ongoing attention. According to University Senate By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations, Common Curriculum Requirements are overseen by a Common Curriculum Oversight Committee (GEOC).

During the transition to the new Common Curriculum requirements, the Implementation Guidelines will be used to work out details of process and resources.

### **PART C: Criteria for Specific Topics of Inquiry**

After completing the Common Curriculum, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate creation of novel intellectual output as an individual and/or as a member of a creative team;
- Articulate and demonstrate the experiences, knowledge, and skills needed to address local and global environmental challenges and to be stewards of the land;
- Investigate the diversity of human experience within the United States and appreciate the contributions of different social groups, along with articulating the effects the past has had on present-day circumstances, perceptions, and disparities;
- Examine the variety of perspectives in the global community and distinguish their own cultural patterns and respond flexibly to multiple worldviews;
- Develop and apply knowledge of social responsibility and ethical behavior;
- Demonstrate the relationship of self to the world through investigation of the influence of social, cultural, economic, and political institutions in shaping human thought, value, and behavior;
- Design an experiment suitable for scientific investigation to test a scientific hypothesis and interpret the results;
- Solve problems described verbally, graphically, symbolically, or numerically;
- Think critically and independently about the world through the breadth, diversity, and creativity of human experience;

- Collaborate with other students and faculty

For any course to be included in a specific Topic of Inquiry, it should be oriented toward these overarching goals. Each Topic of Inquiry (and associated Learning Objectives), as well as the five Competency Areas, are briefly described below.

### **TOI-1: Creativity: Design, Expression, Innovation**

#### **Definition**

In any discipline, creativity is a process that turns novel ideas into reality. Courses in this topic require higher-order thought processes that imagine new possibilities. Through the application of innovative thought and activity, students will conceive and/or produce new forms of expression, ideas, mechanisms, and products.

#### **Learning Objectives**

To meet this Topic of Inquiry category, courses must meet the two TOI1 learning objectives.

**TOI-1 Learning Objective 1:** Students will be able to conceive, design, and/or create new ideas, mechanisms, artistic works, or products and discuss the importance of creativity, ideation, innovation, and/or technical design output to individuals, organizations, society, and/or various fields of study.

**TOI-1 Learning Objective 2:** Students will be able to demonstrate skill with evaluating, adjusting, and adapting the creative process to address particular challenges, needs, or conditions.

### **TOI-2: Cultural Dimensions of Human Experiences**

#### **Definition**

Human cultures are fluid and interwoven sets of values, shared beliefs, language, customs, and artistic expressions shaped by experience and history. Courses in this topic promote understanding of cultures of groups of people - large or small - through examination of their specific literary and artistic expressions, their ways of thinking and behaving, their achievements and struggles, and their evolving relationships to their past. Cultures change over time as a consequence of internal challenges and external contacts. Cultures and groups are not isolated from each other but exist in relation to each other. Historically these relationships have ranged from co-existence to collaboration and mutual exchange to domination. The nature of the relationships with cultures and groups near and far then shapes cultures as much as their own customs, ways of knowing, and artistic expressions.

#### **Learning Objectives**

To meet this Topic of Inquiry category, courses must meet the two TOI-2 learning objectives.

**TOI-2 Learning Objective 1:** Students will be able to analyze the cultures in a given society in its historical, linguistic, and socio-political context through an understanding of a broad array of historical actors, narratives, artistic forms, power structures, technologies, and beliefs.

**TOI-2 Learning Objective 2:** Students will be able to engage with a variety of perspectives in the global community, distinguish their own cultural patterns, and, through a process of dialogue and/or critical self-reflection, respond flexibly to multiple worldviews.

### **TOI-3: Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice**

#### **Definition**

Courses in this area explore how societies perceive and manage cultural, social, and biological diversity.

Courses consider how diverse human identities are fostered or suppressed in democratic life, as well as the principles and practices for advancing social justice and human rights within systems that privilege select groups over others. These courses examine the dynamics of power and privilege that produce inequalities on individual, structural, and cultural levels, and the role such forces play in shaping social and individual experiences. Students examine how systems (local, national, and/or global) have contributed to social inequity, communicated hierarchies of worth, and perpetuated injustice; as well as how those systems impact their own lives.

Through dialogic engagement, students will develop skills necessary to identify, value, communicate and work across differences. They will learn how active participation in these societies requires knowledge and understanding of people, systems, and cultures beyond one's immediate experience and perspective; and how activists have used this knowledge to create equitable models and more just policies and practices within organizations, institutions, and larger systems within society.

Through the application of theory, knowledge, skills, practices, and values, students consider how they, as social agents, can construct pathways to social equity, justice, and inclusion in local, national, and global contexts.

#### **Learning Objectives**

Courses within this Topic of Inquiry category will accomplish two or more of these TOI-3 learning objectives:

**TOI-3 Learning Objective 1:** Through dialogic engagement, to examine cultural, social, and/or biological diversity within national and/or global contexts and the effects power and privilege have on various social group identities. Students will be able to recognize and discuss basic issues of social injustice and how their own identities intersect with structural forms of oppression and empowerment.



**TOI-3 Learning Objective 2:** Students will be able to discuss the foundations of social inclusion and democracy and the actions that can create and maintain them within national and/or global contexts.

**TOI-3 Learning Objective 3:** Students will be able to recognize, critically investigate and address the various socio-political forces that have historically and currently excluded individuals from societies across the globe, the structures of various kinds of oppression (racism, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, etc.), the different levels on which they occur, and the forces that create, maintain, and perpetuate them.

### **TOI-4: Environmental Literacy**

#### **Definition**

Courses in this area will explore the ability to understand, and articulate perspectives on, the interactions between human society and the natural world, as well as the challenges of environmental stewardship.

#### **Learning Objectives**

Courses in this topic will accomplish one or more of these TOI-4 learning objectives:

**TOI-4 Objective 1:** Examine how human modifications of the natural environment (e.g., agriculture, forestry, mining, road, and housing development) and policies (e.g., water pollution regulation, carbon emission taxation, vehicle mile per gallon standards) impact the natural world.

**TOI-4 Objective 2:** Examine how the natural world affects human well-being, including but not limited to: as a source of essential ecosystem services such as clean air and fresh water; as a location for recreation and aesthetic inspiration; as a source of natural disasters; and as a source of both medicine and disease.

**TOI-4 Objective 3:** Examine how human-environment interactions are represented culturally and artistically, and explore the impacts such activities have on influencing attitudes and behaviors towards environmental stewardship.

**TOI-4 Objective 4:** Examine the historic and contemporary ways in which environmental governance, as well as economic development, has perpetuated environmental and social injustice and contributed to health and wealth disparities around the world.

**TOI-4 Objective 5:** Philosophical debates regarding the role and rights of human beings in the natural world and the ethics surrounding human impacts on ecosystems, nonhuman species, and the future of life on earth.

### **TOI-5: Individual Values and Social Institutions**

## **Definition**

Informed citizenship and leadership call on an appreciation of how society is organized on multiple scales, from individual values and actions to social institutions and economic systems.

## **Learning Objectives**

Courses within this Topic of Inquiry category will accomplish this TOI-5 learning objective:

**TOI-5 Learning Objective:** Through philosophical, humanistic, comparative, and/or social scientific methods of inquiry, students will learn to examine critically both individual and societal values, how they are justified, and how they are influenced by past and present political, social, economic, and/or familial institutions.

## **TOI-6: Science and Empirical Inquiry**

### **Definition**

Knowledge production stems from an interplay of observation, data, hypotheses, and theory concerning the natural universe and social systems. Courses will generally prepare students to be scientifically informed and active participants in modern society by evaluating methodology and evidence.

### **Learning Objectives**

Courses within this Topic of Inquiry category will accomplish at least two of these TOI learning objectives:

**TOI-6 Learning Objective 1:** Students will be able to explain and appropriately utilize basic scientific language and concepts.

**TOI-6 Learning Objective 2:** Students will be able to design or conduct an experiment or analysis suitable to test a scientific hypothesis and be able to interpret the results.

**TOI-6 Learning Objective 3:** Students will be able to solve problems described verbally, graphically, symbolically, or numerically.

### **Laboratory Courses**

TOI-6 courses may be designated as Laboratory (denoted by “L”) or non-Laboratory (denoted by no letter). All students must take at least one course designated as a TOI-6 Laboratory (TOI-6L) to fulfill their Common Curriculum requirement in this area. Students may take multiple TOI-6 courses for the purposes of fulfilling a Focus Area, and these additional courses may be either L or non-L, so long as at least one of the three Focus Area courses is an L.

Laboratory courses are designed to achieve many goals and details of what students will do in a lab course will vary among disciplines. The purpose of laboratory courses is to allow students to experience aspects of research across the physical, biological, and social sciences. This includes identifying problems, asking questions, developing and using models, carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations, and engaging in arguments using evidence.

Laboratory courses provide students with the opportunity to interact with their surroundings. The expectation is that students will draw and use data from their environment using tools, models, and theories. The observations will be used to make scientific arguments using evidence and logical reasoning. Some laboratory courses will involve direct physical manipulation of substances or systems; others will involve indirect modes of delivery such as simulations and computerized models which can study phenomena that are not readily observable physically. The use of remote instrumentation is also included in this definition, as is the analysis of data drawn from the real world or obtained from databases also qualify as lab experience.

Although most often associated with the sciences and engineering, laboratory classes can be used by any instructor who wishes to create an environment where students are physically engaged with concepts in the field through active experimentation and/or exploration. Examples include science laboratories, computer laboratories, private lessons, auto-tutorial, service learning, studios, and clinics.

Through the laboratory experience students can do the following:

- Demonstrate deeper understanding of concepts.
- Apply concepts learned in class to new situations.
- Physically manipulate real world substances or systems under investigation
- Demonstrate thinking skills (critical, quantitative, qualitative).
- Demonstrate skills in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting findings and data.
- Demonstrate experimental skills (e.g., design, observation, and the use of equipment).
- Demonstrate communication skills, including those involved in working in groups. • Demonstrate skills in evaluating conclusions based on quantitative evidence.

### **Looking Forward**

As noted above, although the Common Curriculum is described here as a stand-alone component of undergraduate education, it is meant to be interdependent with students' entire educational experience. Ideally, Common Curriculum experiences might launch students into new fields of study, or enable them to become boundary crossers among and across disciplines and fields. It is essential to the University's mission that students see how the ideas they encounter and skills they develop in Common Curriculum courses are relevant to their future studies.

In particular, Common Curriculum coursework might play a significant role in any integrative experiences that students have in their later undergraduate studies. Integrative experiences promote thinking within or across disciplines to generate original ideas and to find new ways of

perception and expression. The goal is to develop capacity and reinforce students' abilities to produce new knowledge and make connections that promote innovation and problem-solving in societal and industrial practices. Such experiences might be curricular or extra-curricular, they might involve internships, education abroad experiences, independent studies, grant-funded projects, service learning projects, or honors program experiences. Such experiences allow students to integrate knowledge across multiple courses and experiences, reflect on how their learning has evolved over time, and apply knowledge and skills to solve authentic problems. And Common Curriculum courses – which also embrace active engagement in relevant and pressing problems best approached through inter-, cross-, multi-, and transdisciplinary collaborations – should be designed to prepare students for those later experiences.

## **APPENDIX**

### **QUANTITATIVE, SECOND LANGUAGE, AND WRITING**

### **CORE COMPETENCIES**

#### **Quantitative (Q) Competency**

##### **Definition of a Q course:**

Q courses require the knowledge and use of mathematics and/or statistics at or above the basic algebra level as an integral part of the course. These courses might include comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data. The mathematical and/or statistical methods and skills required are those specific to the particular course and discipline.

##### **Criteria:**

Courses appropriate for a Q designation should have the following attributes:

1. Mathematics and/or statistics at or above the basic algebra level must be an integral part and used throughout the course;
2. Courses must include use of basic algebraic concepts such as formulas and functions, linear and quadratic equations and their graphs, systems of equations, polynomials, fractional expressions, exponents, powers and roots, problem-solving, and word problems. Formal abstract structures used in symbolic logic and other algebraic analyses are acceptable;
3. Courses should require the student to understand and carry out actual mathematical and/or statistical manipulations and relate them to whatever data might be provided to draw conclusions. Merely feeding numerical data into a program on a computer or a calculator to obtain a numerical result does not satisfy this requirement. Technology should be viewed as a tool to aid understanding and not as a driver of content.

##### **Entry Expectations:**

The present admission requirement for quantitative skills is the satisfactory completion of three or more years of high school mathematics course work including second-year algebra and first-year geometry. Students are strongly encouraged, however, to take four years of mathematics in high school. All students are expected to enter the University with competency in basic algebra and quantitative reasoning as preparation for completing Q courses. All entering students will be evaluated for quantitative proficiency based on their Math SAT1 score and/or class rank.

### **Exit Expectations:**

All students must pass two Q courses, which may also satisfy a Topic of Inquiry requirement. One Q course must be from Mathematics or Statistics. Students should discuss with their advisor how best to satisfy these requirements based on their background, prior course preparation, and career aspirations. Students may be encouraged to complete MATH 101: *Basic Algebra With Applications* (a course that does not carry credit toward graduation) prior to enrolling in their first Q course. In some cases, advisors may recommend postponing registration in a Q course until after the student has completed a semester of course work at the University.

### **The University Quantitative Center**

Advisors may also recommend that students avail themselves of support services offered at the University Quantitative Center in Storrs and the regional campuses. The Quantitative Center will be directed by a full-time faculty member who will oversee the administration of diagnostic examinations, quantitative-skills tutorials, workshops, modules, supplemental instruction, etc. The Quantitative Center will also provide support to advisors and faculty teaching Q courses on all campuses.

### **Second Language Competency**

#### **Definition of Second Language Competency:**

Second Language Competency allows students to utilize communication skills and (inter)cultural awareness for effective participation in local, regional, and international contexts. Learning a second language has been proven to have a lifelong impact on developing learning skills, abstract thinking, cognitive and neural flexibility. It sharpens skills in one's first language and develops the critical thinking and understanding needed to navigate multicultural, multilingual societies in the US and elsewhere. Thus, learning a second language positively influences professional opportunities after graduation.

The second language competency requirement can be completed by taking classes in the wide variety of languages currently offered at the University of Connecticut's Departments of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages and Linguistics, including American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, Italian, French, German, Greek (Modern and Ancient), Irish, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Portuguese, or Spanish. Students are strongly encouraged to take two consecutive semesters of the language to closely follow the developmental process of language learning.

## **Second Language Competency Learning Goals:**

After successfully completing the exit requirements (see below), students will be able to:

- Respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information; ask formulaic questions, and negotiate meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases in the second language, as befitting a novice high level of competency according to the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL);
- Show sensitivity toward and awareness of cultural differences;
- Show awareness of similarities between the first and second languages;
- Use the language to make connections and comparisons with other languages and cultures, past and present; and
- Use the language to broaden and deepen perspectives on major courses of study, career goals, and world events.
- These goals are based on ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, which establish proficiency levels on a scale from novice to superior, with specific measures of what individuals can do at each level. The ACTFL guidelines are continually revised, and our learning objectives follow these guidelines.

## **Entry Expectations:**

The present admission requirement for second language skills is two years of study in a second language in high school or the equivalent. Students are strongly encouraged, however, to take three or more years of the same second language by the time they complete high school.

## **Exit Expectations:**

Students meet the minimum requirement if admitted to the University having passed the third-year level of a single second language in high school, or the equivalent. When the years of study have been split between high school and earlier grades, the requirement is met if students have successfully completed the third-year high school-level course. With anything less than that, students must pass the second course in the first-year sequence of college-level study.

## **Writing (W) Competency**

### **Definition of Writing Competency:**

The writing across the curriculum W course requirements are designed to ensure that writing instruction continues after the First-Year Writing courses (English 1007, 1010, 1011, or 2011). As one of the fundamental ways through which academic disciplines explore, construct, and communicate their various forms of knowledge, writing is an essential component of a university education. The goals of the First-Year Writing seminars emphasize the need to “engage students in the work of academic inquiry through the interpretation of difficult texts, [to help them participate in] the issues and arguments that animate the texts, and [to reflect] on the significance

for academic and general culture and for themselves of the critical work of reading and writing” (Freshman English Seminar Description 1). The W requirement extends that work to other courses with an emphasis on the significance of writing in individual major fields of study.

W courses should demonstrate for students the relationship between the writing in the course and the content learning goals of the course. Students should not write simply to be evaluated; they should learn how writing can ground, extend, deepen, and even enable their learning of the course material. In addition to the general formal questions concerning strategies for developing ideas, clarity of organization, and effectiveness of expression, and the discipline-specific format, evidentiary, and stylistic norms, the W requirement should lead students to understand the relationship between their own thinking and writing in a way that will help them continue to develop both throughout their lives and careers after graduation.

The W requirement can be met in formats other than the standard three-credit course. For example, a department might add a fourth credit to a three-credit course to convert the course to a W; another department might adopt a portfolio assessment mechanism that requires substantial writing over a number of semesters’ work in the major; and another department might organize a series of partial W courses in a sequence that, when completed, would fulfill the W requirement.

The W requirement does not limit writing to courses with a W designation; many other classes also require that students write papers and essay examinations.

### **Entry Expectations:**

1. First-Year Writing placement options for first-year students at the University of Connecticut will vary depending upon their incoming qualifications.

- AP Scores: Students who receive a 4 or 5 on the English Composition Advanced Placement Exam or the Literature Advanced Placement Exam receive 4 credits for First-Year Writing, thereby fulfilling the requirement.
- First-Year Writing Placement: The First-Year Writing Guided Placement Survey (GPS) helps all students determine the writing course best aligned with their experiences, needs, and goals.

2. Connecticut Community College Transfer Students:

There is an articulation agreement with each community college that prescribes which two, three-credit community college courses fulfill UConn's First-Year Writing requirement. Four of these six credits count toward the four-credit First-Year Writing requirement; the other two credits come in as electives.

3. Transfer students from other Connecticut colleges and from out-of-state:

These students are assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Director of First-Year Writing.

### **Exit Expectations:**

All students must take either English 1007, 1010, 1011, or 2011. Students with Advanced Placement English scores of 4 or 5 and students are exempted from the ENGL 1007, 1010, or 1011 requirement. Additionally, all students must take two writing intensive (W) courses, one of which must be approved for the student's major (see Departmental Responsibility above). These courses may also satisfy other Topic of Inquiry requirements. 17 (Note: English 1007, 1010, 1011, or 2011 is a prerequisite to all writing-intensive courses.) A writing-intensive course approved for the student's major does not have any credit-hour restriction, but it is to be at the 2000-level.

**The University Writing Center:**

Much of the outside-of-class work involved in writing instruction will be supported by qualified tutors in the University Writing Center at Storrs and the regional campuses. The center, directed by a senior, tenured faculty member with another faculty member as an assistant and a group of graduate student (and in some cases undergraduate) tutors from across the disciplines, will be a clearinghouse for writing issues throughout the University. The Director of the Writing Center will organize on all campuses faculty development workshops for W course instructors and will be responsible for organizing and supervising the W course instructor orientations/workshops. The Writing Center will train tutors, and the Writing Center office will house copies of all W course syllabi that have been approved by GEOC.