

**2021 Recommendation for altering the US Diversity GEP**  
**Submitted by the Council of Undergraduate Education**  
**May 2021**

**Introduction**

In spring 2015 a review subcommittee of CUE was formed to review the diversity component of the General Education Program (GEP) at NC State. That committee approached the work with two guiding issues: ensuring ample opportunity to meet the USD requirement and providing appropriate opportunities to meet the requirement. The work of the review subcommittee revealed several key themes (see Appendix 1):

- the importance of cultural competence
- the importance of the scholarship of diversity
- the difficulty in addressing diversity
- the need to think about diversity holistically
- variance in student and instructor readiness

The 2015 subcommittee presented a number of recommendations to achieve the goals of creating ample and appropriate opportunities for undergraduate students to meet the USD requirement (Appendix 1, pp 1-3).

In fall 2020, the Council on Undergraduate Education, understanding that the committee has the authority to make recommendations to the Provost, chose to engage in a second review of the USD requirement. Catalysts for this review included:

- continued consideration of the issues raised by the 2015 subcommittee
- concerns with review and approval of courses for inclusion in the category course list
- current national events which provided an additional impetus to make sure NC State is meeting the needs of students in this area

The 2020-2021 CUE decided to review the category as a full committee rather than create a subcommittee. The work of the present CUE is a continuation of the work of the 2015 subcommittee. The key themes noted in the 2015 report remained at the forefront of 2020-2021 discussions; several recommendations found in this report echo those included in the 2015 report. Similarly, several of the concerns noted in the 2015 report remain valid in the 2021 recommendation. Appendix 1 presents the 2015 report in its entirety.

**US Diversity**

The North Carolina State University General Education Program (GEP) currently includes a US Diversity (USD) requirement. As currently designed, the USD requirement is a one-course, 0 credit hour co-requisite. The course selected to meet the USD requirement may, currently, be used to satisfy another GEP requirement if the selected course exists on the approved GEP co-requisite list.

CUE reviewed the course credit requirements, co-requisite status, category objectives, and requirements for course inclusion on the category list. CUE members were tasked with seeking feedback and input from their Colleges (including curriculum committees, DEI professionals in the college, academic advisors and associate deans).

**Recommendations**

1. Update the category title to US Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (USDEI)\*. The committee feels that the title US Diversity does not adequately encompass the scope of topics that must be addressed within this category to provide students the foundation needed to grow in their cultural competency.
2. Implement a 3-credit hour requirement for the USDEI category\*. *The USDEI category will carry a 3 credit hour requirement. This requirement may be met by completing one course or a combination of courses totaling 3 credit hours.* Attaching a three credit hour requirement elevates and signals the importance of the requirement. Allowing any combination of 1, 2, and/or 3 credit courses provides opportunities for students to learn in a variety of ways. This approach allows the opportunity for students to select (and colleges to design) a suite of one and two credit courses that collectively expose students to the topic through a holistic combination of practical experiences and scholarly engagement.
3. Designate the USDEI requirement as a standalone GEP category requirement\*. *Courses used to fulfill the USDEI requirement may not be used to satisfy any other GEP category requirements. Courses used to fulfill the USDEI requirement may be used to satisfy major requirements if the course appears on approved major course lists.* This approach allows the flexibility of meeting the requirement with a combination of 1, 2 or 3 credit courses. It also incentivizes the creation of upper level major specific courses that address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, privilege, oppression, power and responsibility that exist within specific disciplines, industries, fields, etc.
4. Adjust the GEP to eliminate the Additional Breadth category. Expand the Humanities category to include courses in the Visual and Performing Arts^. Elevating the USDEI requirement to 3 credit hours creates an overage in the total GEP hours. To address this, CUE recommends eliminating the Additional Breadth category. To address limitations that this may create for students who are interested in exploring VPA courses, CUE recommends that the Humanities category be expanded to allow students to count up to three hours of VPA courses in the HUM category.
5. Update current objectives as follows and require courses to meet all objectives†.
  - *Objective 1: Analyze how diverse identities shape and/or are shaped by cultural and societal influences.*
  - *Objective 2: Analyze the interrelationship and dynamics between historical, social, political, and/or economic processes and diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.*
  - *Objective 3: Evaluate how social actions and interactions between diverse identities affect equality and social justice in the U.S.*

The current USD objectives are such that two focus on the experiential aspect of diversity and two focus on the scholarly study of diversity. CUE recommends revising the current objectives to reduce the number of objectives to three. All courses applying for inclusion on the USDEI list will need to meet all three objectives. This approach ensures that all courses on the USDEI list will reflect the scholarly study of diversity as well as the experiential aspect thus allowing more holistic study of the topic.

6. Update the USDEI category description to include the category definition of 'diverse identities'†. *For the purposes of the USDEI category, diverse identities include religious, gender, gender identity, ethnic, racial, class, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age identities.* This approach allows the USDEI category objectives to be communicated more succinctly and allows for more straightforward category updates as the definition of diverse identities evolves.

\*Single motion vote of 9-3 in favor of the change

^Single motion vote of 9-2 in favor of the change

†Single motion vote of 13-0 in favor of the change

## Considerations

In developing these final recommendations, the committee considered a number of options based on thoughtful feedback from the colleges. Two of the more impactful changes to the current USD co-requirement that included significant discussion and are continued areas of concern are mentioned below.

1. Discussion around the co-requisite status of the USD requirement: Maintaining the co-requisite status of the USD requirement would remove the need to reallocate three hours from Additional Breadth to USDEI within the GEP and eliminate the need to redefine the Humanities category to include Visual and Performing Arts. However, strong support for 1) a three-credit hour requirement for USDEI and 2) for the flexibility to complete the requirement with a combination of 1, 2 or 3 credit courses, led the committee to settle on the stand-alone requirement. Challenges with monitoring the use of multiple courses to fulfill a co-requisite made the option of maintaining co-requisite status untenable. Additionally, the committee recognizes that a standalone requirement that may also count within the major provides incentive for departments to create or redesign upper level, discipline-specific courses to meet the requirement. As noted in the 2015 report, the USDEI requirement would benefit from financial incentives to faculty to facilitate this process. Such incentives have been previously used with other GEP categories and most recently to encourage/support faculty in taking their courses online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Discussion around updating objectives: the 2020 committee agrees with the 2015 review that the current USD objectives are written such that two objectives focus on the experiential aspect of diversity and two focus on the scholarly study of diversity. Since courses currently are required to meet two objectives, it is possible for courses to be focused solely on scholarly study or solely on experiential exposure. The committee believes both aspects of the study of diversity are important but recognizes that the current approach leads to a great deal of variability in student experience. The committee considered creating a 'primary' objective that all courses must meet and then allow choice among the remaining four objectives. Ultimately, the committee felt that 1) reducing the number of objectives to three (while maintaining the spirit and rigor of all four current objectives) and 2) requiring that courses meet all three objectives, best brings the USDEI requirement in line with other GEP Category requirements and ensures that all courses included on the USDEI list meet the full rigor of the category.

## Opposition concerns

Finally, the recommendations contained in this report result from a series of official votes on motions made with regard to the recommendations. Not all voting outcomes were unanimous and noted particular concerns from the representatives of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Details of their concerns for 1 and 2 are included in Appendix 2.

- 1) Allowing 1-2 credit courses to be used toward fulfillment of the USDEI requirement due to concerns of scholarly depth and ability to achieve USDEI objectives.
- 2) Making the requirement a standalone requirement as opposed to a continued co-requisite due to the impact on the Additional Breadth category.
- 3) Need to address Global Knowledge (GK) as the only co-requisite within the GEP. Concerns that altering USD co-requisite status without addressing GK unintentionally downplays the importance of the GK GEP.

Appendices.

Appendix 1: [2015 Review Subcommittee of the Council on Undergraduate Education Report](#)

Appendix 2: [Comments for CUE on USD Vote](#)