

# 3

## GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (GEC)

Chapter 3 is primarily for members of the General Education Committee. It outlines the responsibilities, duties, and composition requirements of the Committee.

This chapter is based on the *Faculty Governance of UHM General Education* document, GEC policies, and the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*.

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### Responsibilities, Personnel, Duties, Role of Liaisons

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#### **Responsibilities**

The GEC develops policies<sup>1</sup> and procedures for implementing and monitoring the GenEd program and is tasked with assessing program effectiveness. The GEC coordinates its efforts with the General Education Office (GEO), the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA), the Council of Academic Advisors (CAA), and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (SEC).

The GEC is also responsible for oversight of the Diversification requirement, the Hawaiian/Second Language (HSL) requirement,<sup>2</sup> and the Focus Exemption (formerly Wild Card).<sup>3</sup> The GEC may form subcommittees to handle these and other general education issues.

Annual Report: The GEC chair prepares an annual report each spring that summarizes committee work for the year. The report is submitted at the final Spring meeting of the Faculty Senate [MOU, item 8]. The latest report is included in Chapter 9.

GEO Advisory Group: The GEC chair and vice chair meet with the GEO Director, GEO staff members, and Gen Ed Board chairs and vice chairs as needed each semester. Members have an opportunity to share information but do not create policy.

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<sup>1</sup> GEC policies are in Chapter 8.

<sup>2</sup> In 2004, the GEC delegated its oversight of HSL to the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature. Currently, the requirement is handled by the individual Schools/Colleges.

<sup>3</sup> Faculty Senate approved GEC's request to rename the "Wild Card" to "Focus Exemption" and restrict exemption to a Focus requirement, 3/21/07.

## Personnel

The GEC has nine voting members, eight of whom are recommended by the Committee on Faculty Service (CFS) and appointed by the SEC [approved by the Faculty Senate, 3/21/07]. The ninth member is a student appointed by the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH). Members serve the following terms that begin on July 1 and end on June 30 each year:

- Chair—a Faculty Senator (2-year term; serves as Vice Chair in 1<sup>st</sup> year)<sup>1</sup>
- Vice Chair—a Faculty Senator (2-year term; becomes Chair in 2<sup>nd</sup> year)<sup>1</sup>
- 5 faculty members, who also serve as liaisons to GenEd boards (3-year terms)
- 1 Faculty Specialist advisor (3-year term)
- 1 student, appointed by ASUH (1-year term)

Non-voting members attend the GEC meetings to provide logistical and administrative support and advice:

- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education (AVCUE)
- Director of Admissions (or designee)
- SEC liaison
- GEO Director
- GEO staff members

## Duties of GEC members

The main task of the GEC is to oversee the development and assessment of the general education curriculum. General duties are carried out in coordination with the GEO and other offices as appropriate and include:

- 1) evaluating/approving/deleting GenEd designations (Foundations, Diversification, Focus) of courses and classes, using the recommendations of the Boards and subcommittees as a guide;
- 2) periodically evaluating standing procedures for the review and approval of proposed courses to assure equity and efficiency, and modifying current procedures/developing new procedures as needed;
- 3) encouraging the creation of new course proposals through workshops and other means as appropriate;
- 4) ensuring that adequate numbers of courses are offered to meet student needs;
- 5) periodically assessing the GenEd program's educational effectiveness through its learning objectives;
- 6) reviewing student Focus Exemption applications and issuing approvals and denials<sup>2</sup>; and
- 7) coordinating the actions and policies of the GEC with the various UHM colleges and their college curriculum committees.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the GEC is a Permanent Committee of the Manoa Faculty Senate with its own governing document, in recent years, it has been required to follow the rules for Standing Committees of the Manoa Faculty Senate. This includes electing a Chair and a Vice Chair at the start of every academic year.

<sup>2</sup> In Fall 2015, the GEC authorized the Focus Boards to act on its behalf to approve course-based Focus Exemption requests. In Fall 2017, the GEC extended the decision-making authority of the Boards to all Focus Exemption requests, both course-based and non-course-based.

## **Duties and roles of liaisons**

The Foundations and Focus Boards are each assigned a GEC committee member who acts as a liaison between the respective board and the GEC. The liaisons 1) serve as the communication link between the GEC and the board; 2) are not voting members of that board; and 3) do not take on board duties. The GEC Chair assigns liaisons based on member and board preferences and scheduling availability. [10/31/12]

The role of the liaison as the communication link between the GEC and the boards is of particular importance when there are significantly differing opinions on proposals. The liaison is expected to “fill in” where meeting minutes and correspondence fail to fully convey the sense of the GEC’s or a board’s deliberation. [10/31/12]

The sections that follow involve the GenEd requirements for which GEC has primary responsibility.

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## Diversification Courses (Core): Requirements; Review Process; Hallmarks and Designation Criteria

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The GEC is directly responsible for overseeing the Diversification component of GenEd. In recent years, decisions about Diversification designations have been delegated to a four-member subcommittee. The Diversification course designation must be requested by the department, rather than an individual faculty member. If approved, the designation is given to all sections of the course, regardless of instructor. It can be attached to any regular, non-experimental undergraduate course (numbered 100-499) that meets the Diversification Hallmarks described in this section. To date, over 1,800 courses have received a Diversification designation.

Unlike the Focus and Foundations areas, Diversification involves no special GenEd proposal form: departments submit requests by completing a UHM-1 (Add a Course of Study) or UHM-2 (Modify a Course of Study) form. The GEO deadlines for UHM-1 and UHM-2 forms are October 15 for the upcoming summer and fall semesters, and March 15 for the upcoming spring semester. The effective term of the Diversification designation is indicated on the UHM form.

### **History**

The Diversification subcommittees, chaired by GEC members, approved the initial Diversification designations given to courses. From 2001 to 2002, the subcommittees reviewed all courses that existed in the Catalog at that time and assigned courses to a Diversification area. UHM departments were notified of the area assignments and asked to confirm the assignments or request a different designation. After feedback was received and considered, decisions were finalized and approved by the GEC. The courses appeared in the *2002–2003 Catalog* with the area designations. The 2001-02 Diversification subcommittees were then dissolved. Between 2006 and 2008, all Diversification courses were reviewed by a new Diversification subcommittee comprised of GEC members as part of a five-year renewal plan. Currently, a committee made up of 3-4 current or recent GEC members is formed each year; the subcommittee reviews and makes decisions on requests for new or modified Diversification designations, as well as transfer credit evaluation (TCE) requests for non-UH transfer courses that have no UHM equivalent.

### **Requirements**

The Core Diversification requirements are set forth in the *UH Mānoa General Education Requirements* document. Any changes in the requirements require Faculty Senate approval. The GEC created Hallmarks, Explanatory Notes, and Eligibility Criteria, which are used to review courses. Changes in Hallmarks, Explanatory Notes, and Eligibility Criteria require GEC approval.

The *UH Mānoa General Education Requirements* document describes the requirements:<sup>1</sup>

The Diversification requirement is intended to assure that every student has a broad exposure to different domains of academic knowledge, while at the same time allowing flexibility for students with different goals and interests.

More specifically, students must take courses in:

Arts, Humanities, & Literatures (DA, DH, DL): 6 credits

To satisfy this requirement, students must take six credits; the six credits must include two of the three different areas. Arts area courses are designated “DA,” Humanities area courses as “DH,” and Literatures area courses as “DL” in the course descriptions [of the *UHM Catalog*].

Natural Sciences (DB, DP, DY): 7 credits

To satisfy this requirement, students must take seven credits: three credits in biological science (DB), three credits in physical science (DP), and one credit of science laboratory (DY). Approved courses are identified in the *Catalog* with appropriate letters after the course descriptions.

Social Sciences (DS): 6 credits

To satisfy this requirement, students must take six credits from two different departments.<sup>2</sup> Approved courses are identified in the *Catalog* with the letters “DS” after the course descriptions.

### **Diversification Course Review Process / UHM-1 or UHM-2 form**

The GEC Diversification subcommittee reviews requests and makes decisions about UHM Diversification designations by consensus; if consensus cannot be reached, requests are decided upon by a majority vote or brought to the full GEC for a final decision.

1. To request a designation, departments follow procedures for completing either the UHM-1 (Add a Course of Study) or the UHM-2 (Modify a Course of Study) form. The forms are forwarded to the GEO after the department and college have approved the course addition/modification/deletion.
2. The Diversification subcommittee reviews each request and makes a decision to approve or deny.<sup>3</sup>
  - The primary review criterion is whether the course *Catalog* description and/or syllabus reflects the Hallmarks. If not, no designation is approved. If unclear, the department is contacted for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Prior to Fall 2007, students could not take Diversification courses from the same department as those courses used to satisfy the Foundations-Global and Multicultural Perspectives (FG) requirement. Effective Fall 2007, Diversification and FG courses may be taken from the same department [approved by the Faculty Senate, 3/21/2007].

<sup>2</sup> Some departments have multiple course alphas. Students who take their two DS courses from the same department but with different course alphas are considered to have fulfilled the DS requirement. For example, the Family and Consumer Sciences Department offers two course alphas: Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) and Fashion Design and Merchandising (FDM). A student who takes HDFS 230 and FDM 200 is considered to have fulfilled the DS requirement.

<sup>3</sup> In April 2010, the GEC authorized the Diversification subcommittee to act on its behalf to approve Diversification designations. Additional information under “Diversification Requirements and Courses” in Chapter 8.

- Initially, joint designations were not permitted. Currently a joint designation may be requested and approved only if the course has an embedded science laboratory (e.g., DB+DY, DP+DY).
  - Forms are reviewed as they are received. Quick turn-around time is needed because the Diversification review is but one step in a multi-step process for UHM course creation and modification.
3. If the subcommittee cannot come to a consensus, the request is decided upon by a majority vote or brought to the full GEC for a final decision.
  4. GEO records the decision on the UHM-1 or UHM-2 form and sends the form to the OVCAA for processing.
  5. Students are informed of Diversification designations through the “Courses” section of the *Catalog*, STAR, and the *Class Availability* web site.

### **Eligibility Criteria, Hallmarks, and Explanatory Notes**

Below are the official Diversification Eligibility Criteria, Hallmarks, and Explanatory Notes. Together, these are used to determine which courses should receive a Diversification designation.

*Start of official document (updated February 2007)*

#### **Diversification Hallmarks**

Diversification designation is possible for any course that meets basic Course Eligibility Criteria. Consideration of a course for a particular Diversification area is guided by Diversification area Hallmarks and Explanatory Notes.

#### **I. Course Eligibility Criteria**

- A. Course content determines a Diversification designation. (The traditional disciplinary affiliations of the department, school, or college that offers the course are not factors. Thus, a course in the College of Social Sciences may receive a Biological Science designation.)
- B. Two thirds of the content of the course’s governing syllabus and approximately two thirds of the required class meetings must demonstrate the Hallmarks of its Diversification category.

Examples:

- DS (Social Science) designation: Family Resources course that is 2/3 social sciences and 1/3 humanities.
- No designation:
  - A course that studies film theory for half the course (i.e., DL) and representations of culture in film (i.e., DH) for half of the course.
  - A course with content that is one half biological science and one half social science.

- A “topics” course with content that can vary each semester from Literatures to Humanities.
- C. Two simultaneous designations may be granted only for a course with an embedded science lab (DB+DY or DP+DY).
- D. Cross-listed courses must have the same Diversification designation.
- E. Ineligible for Diversification designations are the following types of courses:
  - directed reading and research (courses typically numbered X99)
  - internship
  - practicum
  - experimental (courses typically numbered x97 or x98)
  - graduate-level

## **II. Hallmarks and Explanatory Notes**

### **DA (Arts) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Arts area requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DA.1 uses the definitions, descriptions, and terminology of the visual arts, performing arts, or other creative arts;
- DA.2 emphasizes the acquisition of practical and theoretical skills necessary to produce visual, performing, or other creative arts for primarily aesthetic purposes;
- DA.3 develops creative abilities in which artistic conventions are applied and originality is sought.

### **DA Hallmarks Explanatory Notes**

It is the practice of various forms of the arts that distinguishes the Diversification Arts category from the categories involving Humanities (DH) and Literatures (DL). Practice implies making, doing, or inventing; practice implies personal involvement in the production or replication of traditional and experimental art forms. It is a student’s practice which is evaluated.

Practice may be supported by historical and theoretical study and by analyses relevant to the critical evaluation of the subject and of students' creative endeavors.

Arts courses sometimes involve both lecture and practice. For instance, a course may include a lecture component and a separate laboratory, studio, workshop, or practicum. Such courses may earn the DA designation if two-thirds of the combined lecture + practice components demonstrate the hallmarks.

### **DH (Humanities) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Humanities area requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DH.1 uses the terminology of historical, philosophical, language or religious studies;
- DH.2 involves texts, artifacts, concepts, processes, theories or issues of concern in these studies;
- DH.3 demonstrates inquiry that involves the methods of study, reflection, evidence-gathering, and argumentation that are employed in these studies.

### **DH Hallmarks Explanatory Notes**

The Humanities category covers a broad range of disciplines and styles of inquiry. Courses that study culture, history, or ethics by examining texts, documents, or film typically qualify for the DH designation. Occasionally, overlaps can be problematic. A literature studies course, for example, may be DH, DL, or neither. Courses that study film as a representation of culture typically qualify as DH; courses that study

film as text typically qualify as DL; courses in which film production and creation are goals typically qualify as DA.

### **DL (Literatures) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Literatures area requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DL.1 uses the terminology of literary and/or cultural analysis;
- DL.2 involves the study of texts, concepts, forms, figures, styles, tonalities, processes, theories, or issues relating to literary and/or cultural analysis;
- DL.3 demonstrates inquiry that is guided by qualitative, argumentative, and/or quantitative methods employed in literary and/or cultural analysis.

### **DL Hallmarks Explanatory Notes**

The focus of the Literatures (DL) category is the reading, study, and examination of all types of literary works as text. Often the word “literature” is included in the course title.

Departments should consider whether the Arts (DA) category is more appropriate if the course focus involves creative writing. Departments should consider the Humanities (DH) category if two thirds of the course content focuses on cultures, or consider the Social Sciences (DS) category if two thirds of the course focuses on societal analysis or impact. Courses that study film as text typically qualify as DL; courses that study film as a representation of culture typically qualify as DH; courses in which film production and creation are goals typically qualify as DA.

### **DS (Social Sciences) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Social Sciences requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DS.1 uses the terminology of theories, structures, or processes in the social or psychological sciences;
- DS.2 involves concepts, models, practices, or issues of concern in the scientific study of these theories, structures, or processes;
- DS.3 demonstrates inquiry that is guided by quantitative and/or qualitative methods employed in the scientific study of structures or processes of these sciences.

### **DS Hallmarks Explanatory Notes**

Courses in the Social Sciences (DS) category examine the behavior and interactions of people within societies, and interactions between societies. Students in DS courses are introduced to social science concepts and theories that explain such behavior and interactions at levels that range from the individual to the social structure. DS courses introduce students to methods such as interviews, observation, surveys, experiments, and literature reviews.

Courses that study culture by examining existing texts, documents, or film may better fit in the Humanities category (DH); a historical survey of societal development is typically classified as DH; courses that focus on, e.g., poems, speeches, or songs may better fit in the Literatures category (DL).

### **DB (Biological Science) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Biological Science requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DB.1 uses the terminology of the biological sciences;
- DB.2 involves knowledge and theories relating to processes in the biological sciences;
- DB.3 demonstrates inquiry that is guided by observation/experiment and reasoning/mathematics.

### **DP (Physical Science) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Physical Science requirement, at least two-thirds of a course

- DP.1 uses the terminology of the physical sciences;
- DP.2 involves knowledge and theories relating to processes in the physical sciences;
- DP.3 demonstrates inquiry that involves observation/experiment and reasoning and mathematics.

### **DY (Science Laboratory) Hallmarks**

To satisfy the Laboratory requirement, a course

- DY.1 uses the laboratory methods of the biological or physical sciences;
- DY.2 involves processes and issues of design, testing, and measurement;
- DY.3 demonstrates the strengths and limitations of the scientific method.

### **DB, DP, DY Hallmark Explanatory Notes**

For courses that are multidisciplinary (e.g., “Biochemistry”), an instructor must ensure that 2/3 of the course content covers either DP or DB for the course to merit a designation.

In order to design laboratory courses for DY (Science Laboratory) designation, the course must employ laboratory methods of the biological or physical sciences and ensure that students are introduced to a variety of quantitative approaches as well as to processes and issues of design, testing, and measurement. Courses offering students the opportunity to learn the use of a software program or analytical instrument are considered practica and thus are not eligible for DY designation, even though the instructor envisions application of the software/instrument to the solution of a variety of science problems. Such course content is not sufficient for DY designation.

[Source: GEC Diversification Hallmarks]

**End of official document**

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## Hawaiian/Second Language

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Hawaiian/Second Language (HSL) is a GenEd Special Graduation requirement. In practice, the GEC has played a minimal role in overseeing the requirement and the curriculum. The HSL faculty committee, formed by the Arts and Sciences College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature, used to oversee the HSL designation, including assessment, back-credit awards, and language-course transfer to UHM. Currently, the requirement is generally handled by the individual Schools/Colleges.

Each College Faculty Senate has the authority to modify the HSL requirement for its students, upon approval of the Chancellor. Formerly, a College's Faculty Senate was to consult with the GEC regarding modifications of the HSL requirement that it was requesting from the Chancellor. In 2002, the GEC decided to forego its consultative role. [See Resolutions: Hawaiian or Second Language Waiver Resolution, [www.hawaii.edu/gened/gec/gec\\_resources.htm](http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/gec/gec_resources.htm)]

The OVCAA website describes the College/School modifications to the HSL requirement. As a result of the Colleges' and Chancellor's actions, approximately 50% of UHM's graduating students do not have to satisfy the HSL GenEd Special Graduation requirement of 202-level language competency.

The most recent documents on HSL can be found at:

[http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/planning\\_approval/pdf/hsl\\_waivers\\_web.pdf](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/planning_approval/pdf/hsl_waivers_web.pdf) and  
<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/req/hsl/>

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## Focus Exemption

(formerly Wild Card Option)

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(See *UH Mānoa General Education Requirements* and Focus Exemption information and application materials; also available online at <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/students/exemptions/>)

When creating the GenEd program, faculty recognized that some students may engage in an extraordinary or especially valued educational experience before or during their academic career. The Focus Exemption rewards students for such experiences. It can be used to exempt a student from up to three appropriate Focus course requirements. [9/17/14] However, it does not reduce the total number of credits needed to graduate. [Approved by the Faculty Senate, 3/21/07]

The GEC is responsible for reviewing Focus Exemption applications, which are submitted by individual students. In Fall 2015, the GEC delegated responsibility for course-based Focus Exemption requests to the Focus Boards, whom they felt had more expertise in that area. In cases where the vote was split, the GEC continued to serve as the final arbiter. [12/2/15] In Fall 2017, the GEC extended final decision-making authority for all Focus Exemption requests, both course-based and non-course, to the respective Focus Board(s). All applications must be evaluated by a quorum of the full voting membership of the Board(s). [11/30/17]

Applications are judged on how well they meet the Focus Hallmarks. Students who are applying for a Focus exemption based on a non-course experience should use the *Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences*. Students with an extraordinary experience tied to a course (e.g., a Study Abroad course, business workshop, training course, military course) should use the *Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences*. Activities such as a service learning project completed as a course requirement fit under the course-based category.

### **Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences**

#### ***Contemporary Ethical Issues: Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences***

- E1. The experience involved a contemporary ethical issue.  
Examples of contemporary ethical issues include (but are not limited to): medical research; bioethics; ethical business practices; the withholding of information from employees by employers; the sale of personal information; product safety; stem cell research; immigration laws and policies; political campaign contributions; child labor; use of non-lethal weapons; access to technology; plagiarism, copyright, and open source issues.
- E2. The student learned a way of responsibly analyzing and dealing with ethical issues.  
Ideally, the student learned a framework for deliberating on ethical issues.
- E3. The experience provided practice in how to identify ethical issues.
- E4. The duration of the experience was at least 32 hours.

### ***Hawaiian, Asian, & Pacific Issues: Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences***

- H1. Through the experience, the student learned about one of the following:
- an intersection of Hawaiian culture with Asian culture
  - an intersection of Hawaiian culture with Pacific Island culture
  - an intersection of Hawaiian culture with Asian and Pacific Island cultures
- An *intersection* occurs when aspects of the cultures combine or influence each other.
- H2. The student learned about the cultures from the perspectives and voices of Native Hawaiians and the indigenous people(s) of Asia and/or Pacific Islands. To demonstrate that the student learned from the native perspectives, the student should include in their statement (a) the names of the Native Hawaiians and (b) the names of the indigenous Asians or Pacific Islanders studied or involved in the experience. Please note that a non-indigenous person's interpretation of native perspectives is insufficient.
- H3. The experience dealt with at least one topic that is crucial to an understanding of the histories, cultures, beliefs, arts, or the societal, political, economic, or technological processes of the regions involved in the intersection; for example, the relationships of societal structures to the natural environment.
- H4. The experience resulted in greater cross-cultural understanding.
- H5. The duration of the experience was at least 32 hours.

### ***Oral Communication: Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences***

- O1. At least three oral presentations were given. Oral presentations include (but are not limited to) speeches, panel discussions, debates, interviews, facilitation and participation in community gatherings, participation in service learning and outreach activities (tutoring, teaching, coaching), press conferences, creative or aesthetic performances (storytelling, performance of literature, dramatic performance, readings).
- O2. Instruction and guidance on how to give an oral presentation was provided by a mentor, supervisor, director, employer, or similar person.
- O3. Individual feedback and critique of performance was given by a mentor, supervisor, director, employer, and/or audience members.

### ***Writing Intensive: Hallmarks for Non-Course Experiences***

- W1. Writing contributed to learning in the experience. For example, the writing enhanced the understanding of the experience or encouraged self-reflection during the experience.
- W2. Individual feedback was given during the writing process. For example, before completing a piece of writing, a mentor, employer, or supervisor commented on the writing and then the student revised the writing.
- W3. At least 16 pages (4,000 words) of finished writing were completed.
- W4. Writing was a significant part of the experience. For example, the writing was published for an audience or the writing was "high-stakes" in that poor writing resulted in an unsuccessful experience in the eyes of a mentor, employer, or supervisor.

## **Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences**

### ***Contemporary Ethical Issues: Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences***

- E1. Contemporary ethical issues were presented and studied in a manner that was fully integrated into the main course content.
- E2. The disciplinary approach(es) used in the class gave students tools for the development of responsible deliberation and ethical judgment.
- E3. Students achieved basic competency in analyzing and deliberating upon contemporary ethical issues to help them make ethically determined judgments.
- E4. The contemporary ethical issues experience was equal to one semester credit-hour or 30% of a three-credit course.
- E5. A minimum of 8 hours of class time was spent in discussing contemporary ethical issues.
- E6. The course/workshop/training level was the equivalent of a 300- or 400-level college course.

### ***Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues: Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences***

To fulfill the Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues Focus requirement, at least two-thirds of a course-based experience must satisfy the following Hallmarks:

- H1. Content reflected the intersection of Asian and/or Pacific Island cultures with Native Hawaiian culture.
- H2. Used any disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach provided that a component of the course used assignments or practica that encouraged learning that came from the cultural perspectives, values, and world views rooted in the experience of peoples indigenous to Hawai'i, the Pacific, and Asia.  
Note: Identify in the syllabus or explain in the statement where exposure to or engagement with the native voices that represent the cultural perspectives, values, and world views rooted in the experience of peoples indigenous to Hawai'i occurred. Include the names of the native voices. The native voices can be readings, videos, guest speakers or field trips. Both the native Hawaiian voice and the native voice from the indigenous people of the area of intersection must be included.
- H3. Included at least one topic that is crucial to an understanding of the histories, or cultures, or beliefs, or the arts, or the societal, or political, or economic, or technological processes of these regions; for example, the relationships of societal structures to the natural environment.
- H4. Involved an in-depth analysis or understanding of the issues being studied in the hope of fostering multi-cultural respect and understanding.

***Oral Communication: Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences***

- O1. Each student conducted or participated in a minimum of three oral communication assignments or a comparable amount of oral communication activity during the class. In addition, at least 40% of the final grade or evaluation for a 3-credit course was a function of the student's oral communication activities (30% for a 4-credit course; 60% for a 2-credit course; 100% for a 1-credit course).
- O2. Each student received explicit training, in the context of the class, in oral communication concerns relevant to the assignment or activity.
- O3. Each student received specific feedback, critiquing, and grading of the oral communication assignments or activities from the instructor.
- O4. If instructor feedback primarily involves individual or paired students, enrollment was limited to 20 students. If instructor feedback primarily involves groups of students, enrollment was limited to 30.
- O5. The course/workshop/training level was the equivalent of a 300- or 400-level college course.

***Writing Intensive: Hallmarks for Course-Based Experiences***

- W1. The class used writing to promote the learning of course materials.
- W2. The class provided interaction between the instructor and students while students did assigned writing.
- W3. Written assignments contributed significantly to each student's course grade or evaluation.
- W4. The class required students to do a substantial amount of writing—a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.
- W5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, the class was restricted to 20 students.

## FOCUS EXEMPTION Information and Application

Undergraduate students may apply for exemption from up to three Focus requirements if they have had one or more *extraordinary college-level educational experiences* that fall outside of normal university coursework and also meet appropriate Focus Hallmarks. A separate application form should be submitted for each experience, although one experience/application can be submitted to request exemption from multiple Focus requirements. (Please note that one experience cannot earn multiple W Focus exemptions.) If approved, exemption from a particular Focus requirement does not reduce the total number of credits that a student needs to graduate.

**Deadlines.** Students must submit the Focus Exemption Application Form, statement, and Sponsor Verification and Assessment Form at least one semester prior to the anticipated semester of graduation. Students are encouraged to submit earlier if possible. (Please note that submission does not guarantee approval.) Due dates:

August graduation—March 1 (or earlier)  
December graduation—April 1 (or earlier)  
May graduation—November 1 (or earlier)

Applications are regularly reviewed during the Fall and Spring semesters, and applicants should be notified of a decision approximately 4-6 weeks after submission. Applications that are submitted during the summer months will be reviewed in September, when faculty are back on duty. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

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### Application process

1. Read through all of the Focus Exemption materials to be sure that the experience qualifies and meets the Hallmarks of the Focus requirement from which you are requesting exemption.
2. Determine whether the experience is “course-based” or “non-course.” (See FAQ #2, below.)
3. Submit the application form with a statement of no more than 750 words addressing how the experience was extraordinary and met each of the Hallmarks for the requested Focus area and type of experience.
4. Have the sponsor complete the Sponsor Verification and Assessment Form to be included as part of your application.
5. Include a course syllabus if you are submitting a “course-based” Focus Exemption request.

### Frequently asked questions

#### 1. What makes an experience “extraordinary”?

An extraordinary experience stands out as uncommon when compared to educational experiences of the general UH student population. It is something that falls outside of normal university coursework yet is instructive, with a concentration on knowledge and skills acquisition in the Focus area for which the exemption is sought.

Here are some examples of “extraordinary” experiences that may serve as the basis for an exemption:

- Service as a student representative on a college campus’s academic grievance board (non-course experience; Contemporary Ethical Issues)
- Receipt of training and mentoring on giving public presentations and/or conducting interviews as part of professional work experience in the U.S.A. or abroad (non-course experience; Oral Communication)
- Participation in a project or projects of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (non-course experience; Hawaiian, Asian, & Pacific Issues)
- Production of marketing brochures or informational flyers for a community center (non-course experience; Writing Intensive)
- Successful completion of one or more college courses taught in a foreign country (most commonly taken through the Study Abroad Program). These courses must be taught by non-UHM faculty in order to be eligible. Courses taught by UHM faculty should go through the regular Focus designation process prior to the start of the Study Abroad Program in which they are being offered. Please consult with the General Education Office for clarification regarding these types of experiences, as restrictions apply (course-based experience; Focus area depends on course focus)
- Completion of company training sessions on ethical business practices (course-based experience; Contemporary Ethical Issues)

**2. What is the difference between a “course-based” and a “non-course” experience?**

- A “course-based experience” is an educational experience that involved professional training or one or more classes taken outside of the U.S.A., and for which a Focus designation was not possible. A course taken at another U.S. institution is not considered extraordinary, as over half of UHM students graduate with transfer credits.
- A “non-course experience” is an educational experience that did not involve a course, training session, or other formal instruction.

**3. Which Hallmarks do I use?**

- If the experience involved a course, workshop, training session, or similar educational experience, use the *Focus Exemption: Hallmarks for Courses*.
- For non-course experiences, use the *Focus Exemption: Hallmarks for Non-course Experiences*.

**4. How do I demonstrate that my experience was both *extraordinary* and *educational*?**

In your statement of no more than 750 words, give evidence for how your experience is not possible to obtain at UHM. Explain what you learned as a result of the experience. The knowledge you gained must be directly related to the Hallmarks of the Focus area(s) for which you are seeking an exemption.

**5. How do I provide evidence that the experience met the Focus Hallmarks?**

Consult the *Focus Exemption: Hallmarks for Courses* or *Hallmarks for Non-course Experiences* on the UHM General Education website: [www.hawaii.edu/gened](http://www.hawaii.edu/gened). In your statement, include detailed examples from your experience that illustrate how each Hallmark was met. Be sure to address each of the Hallmarks.

**6. Are there samples that I can follow?**

Each statement will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, not only in terms of the factors mentioned above, but also on the degree or intensity of the experience. Students must present compelling arguments to receive an exemption from the Focus area(s) requested.

**7. Who can be a sponsor?**

The Focus Exemption requires a sponsor who can verify that the student has completed the extraordinary educational experience.

- For course-based experiences, the sponsor should be the course instructor or trainer.
- For non-course experiences, the sponsor can be the director, employer, mentor, or equivalent person who supervised the experience.

**8. What happens after I submit my form, statement, and sponsor verification form?**

Faculty members on the UHM General Education Committee or the appropriate Focus Board(s) will review the documents. You should receive a response to your application approximately four to six weeks after submission during the Fall and Spring semesters, or in September/October if the application is submitted after the April 1 deadline. (Please see above for due dates.)

**9. What if I've missed the deadline?**

Applications that are submitted after the published deadline may be accepted, but it is likely that the request will not be reviewed until the following semester, after registration for that semester has closed. This poses a problem for students if their requests are not approved, as they will not be able to add the additional Focus course they need in order to graduate that semester.

If you decide to submit a Focus Exemption request, make sure it includes the following:

- Application Form
- Sponsor Verification and Assessment Form
- Typed statement explaining how the experience was extraordinary and met each Focus Hallmark
- Course syllabus (required for course-based requests only)



**FOCUS EXEMPTION  
SPONSOR VERIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT FORM**

The UHM Focus Exemption process requires a sponsor who can verify that the applying student has completed the extraordinary educational experience. Information about the Focus Exemption is available at [www.hawaii.edu/gened/](http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/).

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's place of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's title: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours did the applicant put into the project, or how many academic credits did the student earn through the project or course? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of training / evaluation / assessment / feedback did the student receive? From whom?

Please read the student's statement and then explain below why you think student deserves an exemption from the UHM General Education Focus requirement(s) specified.

**Please return this form to the student or submit form directly to  
General Education Office, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
2545 McCarthy Mall / Bilger 104 / Honolulu, HI 96822**

E-mail: [gened@hawaii.edu](mailto:gened@hawaii.edu)

Fax: (808) 956-9170

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## Subcommittees

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GEC subcommittees are formed by the Chair as needed. Current subcommittees handle:

- **Diversification**

Reviews UHM forms that request addition/modification of a course's Diversification designation, as well as articulation requests when the transfer course is interdisciplinary in nature or it is otherwise unclear what Diversification designation, if any, the course should be given.
- **Governance**

Convened in Spring 2017 to review GenEd and Mānoa Faculty Senate documents in an effort to reconcile discrepancies and other ambiguities related to the governance of UHM General Education. The subcommittee's recommendations were submitted to the GenEd Review Steering Committee, which oversaw the GenEd self-study and program review in 2017-18. A Governance Working Group convened in Spring 2019 worked on updating GenEd governance documents to improve consistency and accuracy; this work is ongoing.
- **Curriculum**

Convened in Spring 2019, the Curriculum Working Group was formed to respond to the recommendations given by the External Review Team's final report, received in May 2018. This working group focused discussions on drafting a mission/vision/values statement for the GenEd program, developing Thematic Pathways in GenEd, and other curricular recommendations.
- **Assessment**

The original subcommittee created a plan in 2004 to assess the Diversification requirements. The plan was not approved by the GEC. In Spring 2019, the GEC established an Assessment Working Group, which developed a seven-year GenEd Assessment Plan that was approved by the GEC at the end of Spring 2019.

Past subcommittees have handled:

- **Focus Exemption** (formerly Wild Card)

Oversaw the change from the Wild Card to Focus Exemption. The subcommittee revised the application form to include the changes recommended by the GEC and approved by the Faculty Senate (3/21/07): name change to *Focus Exemption*; exemption limited to one appropriate Focus course requirement. In Fall 2014, on a three-year trial basis which was extended for another three years in Spring 2018, the GEC raised the limit of Focus exemptions from one to three. Students may use one experience to apply for exemption from multiple Focus requirements; however, only one W exemption can be earned per experience.

[11/9/14]

- **Faculty Mentoring**

From 2001 to 2005, the GEC discussed various strategies and issues related to a faculty mentoring initiative, which was approved in 1999 as part of the GenEd program. In Fall 2005, the GEC sent a memo to the SEC recommending the removal of "Faculty Mentoring" from the GenEd document. In Fall 2007, the Faculty Senate approved changes to the GenEd document, which included removing all references to faculty mentoring.

- **Gen Ed Improvement and Simplifications**

The GEC periodically considers ways to improve, update, or simplify the *UHM General Education Requirements* (see document in chapter 1). In Fall 2007, the GEC placed a motion before the Faculty Senate to modify language of the official General Education Requirements document in order to make it consistent with GEC-condoned practices. The motion was approved by the Senate on 9/19/2007.

Modifications included:

- Updating the Hawaiian/Second Language Requirement section (section B.2)
- Changing student representation on boards (section C)
- Removing Faculty Mentoring from the purview of the GEC (section A.2)
- Clarifying that College Requirements and Major Requirements are not under the purview of the GEC.

The Diversification subcommittee considered a possible merger of three of the Diversification areas (Arts, Humanities, and Literature) but ultimately recommended making no changes (Spring 2008). The subcommittee also considered disallowing Diversification designations at the 400 level, but could not reach agreement, either as a subcommittee or as the full GEC (Spring 2010). A decision was deferred to the next rotation of GEC members, which decided to maintain the status quo.

- **GenEd Goals for Every Major**

The subcommittee discussed how to implement the section of the GenEd program that specified major requirements: information-accessing and information-processing; problem-solving; oral communication; experience with the field's modes of inquiry and analysis (see chapter 1, p. 7). [Background: Mānoa's GenEd redefines the relationship between GenEd and the student's major. Traditional general education programs offer 100- and 200-level courses that are taken before students declare a major. The GenEd program at Mānoa, in accordance with WASC guidelines, offers courses at all levels and requires some upper-division coursework.]

In Spring 2005, the OVCAA asked departments to submit assessment reports. As part of their reports, departments were asked to explain how their students were learning information-accessing and information-processing skills.

In Spring 2007, the GEC agreed that the requirements of UHM's majors are not under the purview of the GEC. This language was added to the GenEd governance document after the proposed change was approved by the Faculty Senate in Fall 2007.