

FAQ for Faculty submitting proposals for Certification in GE

Q: Where do I go to submit my course?

A: Go to <https://courseproposal.sfsu.edu> and enter your SFSU ID and password. You can also find a link to the form on the GE website.

Q: Can I have a proposal for a new or revised course reviewed by CRC at the same time as it is reviewed for a baccalaureate requirement?

A: No. A new or revised course must first be approved by the curriculum office (typically through CRC) before it can be forwarded to the Lower or Upper Division certification committee.

Q: Can I construct my proposal in a word processing program then import it into the form?

A: You can and should write your proposal in a word processing program. You cannot import or attach Word files, but you can copy-and-paste the information into the online course proposal form. Keep in mind that the boxes in the form can be expanded by clicking and dragging on the lower right corner of each box. This can make editing easier.

Q: What should I put in the course outline section? Can't I just attach a syllabus?

A: A course outline that provides a chronological sequence of topical coverage and indicates roughly how much of the course each topic occupies, together with information (in the outline or in the SLO narratives, for example) about how assignments, other instructional activities, and exams articulate with the sequence of topics, can help reviewers place each SLO in the larger context of the course. This can help make SLO narratives more persuasive.

Unfortunately there is no mechanism to upload a syllabus. Although you can attach one to the print copy of your form, the materials for review are distributed electronically, and if an electronic version is not available, the committee will not receive it. If you want to attach a syllabus, please contact the GE Director to make arrangements for it to be included in the review packet. Please note, however, that the committees are not obligated to include the syllabus in their review (nor should your proposal consist of references to "see syllabus").

Q: How do the course expectations differ from SLOs?

A: The "Course Expectations" portion of the proposal contain details about the course itself (required content, upper or lower division restrictions, rules on enrollment and prerequisites etc.). These are either present in the course or they aren't. When the course is submitted for recertification (see below) the presence of these requirements in the course will be checked. For now, you are required to check the box certifying that your course meets the expectations, and if it isn't obvious from your proposal that they do, you may need to provide some explanation as to how the course meets the expectations.

Q: Do I have to discuss all parts of an SLO? Some have two or three distinct sections.

A: Yes. Unless a Student Learning Outcome includes the word “or,” the committee interprets them as “and” statements. Please address each part of each SLO explicitly. The easiest way to do this is to cite the specific assignments that pertain to each point and to also explicitly describe *how* the students will meet the SLO through these assignments. For examples, see below and also consult the approved proposals mentioned above.

Q: How much detail should I include in the SLO boxes?

A: For each Student Learning Object (SLO), the proposal should offer a brief narrative, written to persuade the reviewers that students completing the course can achieve the SLO. The language of the narrative should be understandable by faculty members outside the proposer's discipline. It must necessarily avoid jargon. (Ideally, the language would be understandable to students, because they should understand both the SLOs and how the course is helping them meet them.) A short paragraph or two is enough to address many (most?) SLOs, though some complex SLOs might require more attention. Here are some elements that should be in your narrative:

- 1) Identify and, if necessary, briefly describe one or more instructional strategies that can help students "acquire the information and skills needed" to meet each articulated facet of the SLO. (Some SLOs have multiple facets.)
- 2) For each facet, cite a specific, concrete example of how the course will address that facet. (Simple assertion that the SLO will be addressed in the course, however often, will not persuade.)
- 3) If necessary (but only if necessary), include carefully selected course materials that illustrate or support the argument compellingly.
- 4) Identify how the instructor will tell whether or not each student has met the SLO (i.e., assessment mechanism).

Q: What kind of information are you looking for in SLOs?

A: SLOs focus on what students will learn and how they will demonstrate that learning has occurred, *not what faculty members teach*. In the "assignments/activities" sections of the proposal, please describe *how* students will *demonstrate* what they have learned. The emphasis should not be on lectures, readings, etc., but on what work the students will produce and how it will be evaluated. If your proposal states that some SLOs are met through in-class discussion, the syllabus must specify what part of the student's grade comes from discussion and how that grade will be evaluated.

Q: What if my current course does not include a research component and the SLO requires one?

A: Upper Division SLO 4 demands that students go beyond the materials supplied to them by the instructor and that library sources (including digital sources) be included among the sources they acquire. If your course does not currently include such an assignment, you will have to change the assignments in order to meet this SLO.

Q: Is my course proposal submitted when I complete the online form ?

A: Alas, no. Once you have completed your proposal, you must still print it out and have it signed by your department chair. They will forward it to the Associate Dean, who will sign and forward to the Curriculum Office.

REVISIONS TO SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

Q: What happens if I need to revise my proposal?

A: Many proposals need to be revised after the initial submission. The review committee, either UDCC or LDCC will forward you comments to guide your revision. Comments might take the form of notes and highlights on a PDF copy of your proposal, or they might be in a separate word-processing document. Please allow up to two weeks after the committee meeting for comments to arrive.

Q: How do I submit a revision to an already reviewed proposal?

A: Once you have completed your revisions, please create a PDF copy of the proposal. Depending on the instructions from your department chair and Associate Dean, you will either route the proposal through them or send it directly to the Director of General Education, Catrióna Rueda Esquibel, at baccregs@sfsu.edu. Please send a copy (cc:) to curriculum specialist Anh Tran anhtran@sfsu.edu. In your accompanying email, please make clear what certification the revisions are being submitted in response to. Hard copies (print copies) of the proposal are not necessary at this stage, so please do not send them.

Q: What do I do if I no longer want to pursue a certification?

A: If you decide after receiving comments from the LDCC or UDCC you no longer wish to pursue a certification, please notify the GE Director at baccregs@sfsu.edu. We can adjust our records and if your certifications are complete, post the proposal on the web.

Q: How many times can I revise a proposal?

A: There are no limits on the number of times a proposal can be revised and resubmitted. As long as you are working with the committee to make the revisions, and both you and the committee feel progress is being made, then you may continue to revise. If the committee feels that a course is not appropriate for the area in which it is being submitted (for example, a course submitted for UD-B appears to belong in UD-D) you will be notified and asked to consider resubmitting in the appropriate area.

Q: What if I don't agree with the comments from the committee and don't feel I need to revise my proposal?

A: If you are unwilling to make the revisions a committee has requested, and feel the course should be certified as is, you may appeal the committee's decision to BRC. Be prepared to provide evidence to support your argument that the course should be certified as it is and that the committee's request is unreasonable.

ONCE YOUR COURSE IS APPROVED

Q: When does my certification take effect?

A: When you receive notification of approval, you will be told the start date for your certification (i.e. Summer 2016, Fall 2106). Certification is not retroactive: students who have taken the course the course prior to the certification date cannot use it to fulfill the requirement(s).

Q: If my course is already certified in the new program, how do I add additional certifications?

A: You should prepare a new proposal for the new certifications. That way there is no confusion about what you are applying for. You can copy and paste the course information from the old proposal.

Q: Should I delete my online proposal once it has been approved?

A: Please do not delete the final proposal. You may, and should, delete any incomplete proposals.

Q: Can I make changes to my course after it has been certified?

A: Yes. The proposals that you prepare for certification are meant to provide evidence that your students are **likely** to be able to meet the SLOs. Once you begin teaching the course you may find that students are not meeting one or more of the outcomes, in which case we highly recommend that you change your course accordingly. Your original proposal will not be used in the recertification process.

Q: For how long is a course certified?

A: Unlike the old GE, which had a one-time certification, the new GE will have a recertification process whereby courses will need to be recertified approximately every four years, to ensure the same course is being taught and the same student learning outcomes addressed. There will be a rotating schedule of recertification, in which faculty will be asked to produce evidence that students in their course are meeting the student learning outcomes for the areas in which the course is certified. Courses that have never been offered and courses that cannot provide evidence of student achievement of the outcomes will have their certification revoked.

Q: What kind of assessment data will I be asked to provide during the recertification process?

A: The process is still under development. The Associate Dean of Academic Planning, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, and the Director of General Education will consult extensively with faculty, with the Baccalaureate Requirements Committee and the subcommittees in Upper-Division and Lower-Division Curriculum Certification in order to devise a plan for recertification.

Q: How often do I need to offer my course to keep its certification(s)?

A: Currently, there is no set amount of time in policy as there was in the old program. However, if courses are listed in the bulletin but not being taught, this misleads the students as to what courses are available. We want to keep the bulletin current and list only courses that are being taught.