

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROGRAM CURRICULUM

1. General Education: The Human Community is the core curriculum for all JMU students regardless of major or program of study. Its purpose is to provide students with a liberal education that emphasizes connections across academic disciplines.
2. General Education: The Human Community is based on learning outcomes rather than courses, and these outcomes are divided into clusters. Each cluster provides students with learning opportunities that address its specific outcomes.
3. Every course in the program must meet the learning outcomes for its intended area within a cluster and should be suitable for the general population of students. In addition, there should be areas of consistency across sections of a particular course, agreed-upon among the faculty who teach it.
4. Any change to the learning outcomes must first be approved by the relevant cluster committees and then the General Education Council (GEC).
5. Any change to the organization of a cluster (e.g., its groups, tracks, areas, domains, or requirements) must first be approved by the relevant cluster committees and then the GEC.
6. All students complete Cluster One during their first academic year at JMU because critical thinking, oral and written communication, and information literacy are foundational to inquiry in the human community. All clusters are responsible for reinforcing the learning outcomes initiated in Cluster One.
7. Major, minor, and pre-professional programs may choose to require courses that are part of General Education: The Human Community, so long as these requirements are clearly listed in the catalog. However, no major, minor, or pre-professional program can require its students to take a particular course in Cluster One.
8. The number of courses in an area of a cluster shall be limited in order to accommodate scheduling and to promote coherence in the cluster.
9. Any course included in the program must be designed so that multiple faculty members can teach it and should be offered in multiple sections every semester. If exceptional circumstances warrant them, alternative scheduling arrangements may be permitted, pending consideration by the relevant administrators.
10. Each cluster will have a procedure to assess students' ability to meet its learning outcomes. Assessment data will be used to promote continuous development and strengthening of each cluster.
11. The evaluation and development of the program will be ongoing. The General Education program will participate in the Academic Program Review (APR) process in a ten-year cycle. This review will follow the APR instructions and calendar schedule as established in the Provost's Office of Academic Affairs.
12. The stability and academic excellence of General Education: The Human Community depends upon fully qualified, experienced, and committed faculty. In general, the participation of part-time instructors and graduate students in the program should be limited.