**CURRICULAR STANDARDS FOR THE UNIVERSITY CORE - TOWSON UNIVERSITY’S GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Towson University’s general education program is referred to as the [University Core](http://wwwnew.towson.edu/senate/university/documents/Universitycoregoalsandoutcomes-110714.docx).

A. In accordance with MHEC guidelines, no course may meet a University Core Curriculum requirement in more than one area.

B. However courses may be constructed to meet University Core requirements at Towson University, they must also conform to the general stipulations and area definitions spelled out in MHEC policy. For example, MHEC policy specifies that “General education courses shall reflect current scholarship in the discipline and provide reference to theoretical frameworks and methods of inquiry appropriate to academic disciplines.” Furthermore, “Courses that are theoretical may include applications, but all applications courses shall include theoretical components if they are to be included as meeting general education requirements.”

C. The complexities of MHEC policy and transfer agreements necessitate that most courses certified as meeting general education requirements will be designed as lower-level courses. Exceptions allowing upper division courses to meet requirements in categories normally at the lower division may be justified by specific circumstances: for example, advanced placement credit or program accreditation requirements.

D. The requirements for the Advanced Writing Seminar are intended by their nature to require upper-division courses. Thus, courses meeting this requirement would not be available at or transferable from community colleges. Advanced Writing Seminar and Perspectives courses should be approved only as upper-division courses.

E. Transfer students are exempt from the requirement to complete the Towson Seminar as a part of their University Core requirements.

F. The Learning Outcomes for the University Core reflect objectives for the Core as a whole toward which each Core course must make a contribution. Courses in all categories must specify as part of the documentation for certification those learning outcomes that will be addressed directly in the course, how they will be addressed, and how progress toward those outcomes for students in the course will be assessed. Faculty or departments may have additional learning outcomes for Core courses, but these may not substitute for attention to learning outcomes established for the Core.

**Certification, Management, and Assessment of University Core Courses**

Maryland state regulations for General Education Core Courses require that “Public institutions shall develop systems to ensure that courses approved for inclusion on the list of general education courses are designed and assessed to comply with the requirements of this chapter.” In keeping with this expectation, the following guidelines should apply.

A. No new or existing course shall be accepted as meeting a University Core course requirement until it has been reviewed by the appropriate faculty committee and until its design and objectives have been found consistent with requirements for the category in which approval is sought.

B. In cases where an existing course, that is offered in multiple sections each year, is being submitted for new or renewed certification, departments shall provide a description of what common elements are expected to be present in all sections of the course and what steps are taken to ensure that these common elements are been included in all sections taught.

C. As part of providing ongoing assessment of Core courses in relation to the stated objectives for the University Core and for their particular Core course category, an appropriate committee should periodically review courses meeting specific requirements by collecting and reviewing course syllabi, as well as other information the committee determines to be relevant. Courses in each Core category should be reviewed at least once every seven years according to a schedule established by the University Assessment Committee. This review will not alone adequately assess whether category objectives and learning outcomes are being met but should assure that those objectives and outcomes remain an evident concern in the teaching of all courses in the category.

D. Especially in the case of University Core course categories that are likely to be taught across a range of colleges, a small set of faculty should be entrusted and empowered with maintaining consistent attention to category objectives across all courses, with providing encouragement and guidance during the development of new courses for the category, and with providing opportunities for faculty teaching the courses to come together for discussion, training, or the exchange of ideas. Such teams should include at least three faculty who come from different departments and from more than one college. In particular, the Towson Seminar and the Advanced Writing Seminar should have such governance teams.

E. The Coordinator of the University Core supervises the certification and management of University Core courses, and coordinates with the Director of Academic Assessment for assessment and course recertification.