

University System of Georgia
Council on General Education

To: Dr. Marti Venn
Chief Academic Officers, all USG institutions

From: USG Council on General Education

Date: July 15, 2016

Re: Recommendations on Placement of FL 1001 in Areas B and C

As discussed at our meetings on 19 February and 15 July, 2016, the following memorandum details the issues that the Council on General Education considered regarding placement of 1001-level foreign language courses in Areas B and C of the Core Curriculum and the recommendation that follows from that discussion.

The existing guidelines regarding placement and transfer of 1001-level foreign language courses can be found in section 2.4.5 Academic and Student Affairs Handbook (5th paragraph) which can be found on the university system website:

http://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section2/C738/#p2.4.5_rules_regarding_inclusion_in_areas_af.

Institutions may decide that the first course in a foreign language falls outside of the maximum number of hours indicated for undergraduate degrees and/or outside of Areas A-F. Institutions that decide that the first course in a foreign language falls outside of the maximum number of hours are not required to grant transfer credit for such courses but may do so if they wish.

Implementation of this policy has created some confusion, which the Council wishes to remedy with the recommendation that follows. There are several problematic issues:

1. At the time of the New Core revision, the common understanding was that 1001-level foreign language courses were to be used to satisfy CPC (College Preparatory Curriculum) requirements, which at the time did not earn college credit. It was recommended that institutions that placed 1001-level foreign language courses in Area C, especially for the more commonly taught languages like Spanish and French, without additional justification, should remove those courses from Area C.
2. At the same time, institutions that already had 1001-level foreign language courses in Area C that did not make changes during New Core revision, and thus “grandfathered” their Area C, were allowed to keep these courses in that area.
3. This discrepancy has caused confusion and transfer issues.
4. More recently, system policy has allowed courses taken for CPC to be granted college credit, essentially dismantling the argument that the 1001-level foreign language courses are not “college level” courses.

The Council on General Education recommends the following course of action:

1. Institutions that already have foreign language courses at the level of 1002 in Areas B or C and higher should review their Areas B and C Learning Outcomes to determine if they can be satisfied by 1001-level foreign language courses.
2. If so, then institutions are invited to add these courses to Areas B and C of their Core and to inform the Council by way of a formal memo from

the Chief Academic Office to the Chair of the Council on General Education.

3. Some institutions may need to revise their Area B or C learning outcome(s) if they wish to add these courses.
4. As the section 2.4.5 of the Academic and Student Affairs Handbook states, institutions are not required to award transfer credit for these courses.
5. Students should be informed through the advising process that transfer of foreign language credit is fraught with more nuance than most other types of credit. Some institutions award institutional credit that may not be honored by transfer institutions. Placement in higher level foreign language courses will likely be determined using a placement system that may be standardized or may be internal. Competence in foreign language may atrophy with disuse. Students should always take the highest level course for which they are qualified.
6. Institutions considering placement of foreign language courses in their Core should review SACSCOC Requirement 2.7.3, which states:

In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

As regards foreign language courses specifically, the following interpretation was added in 2010:

Courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication, and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the one course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement in CR 2.7.3. (Interpretation adopted by the Executive Council February 2010)