

AY22-2-A

30 March 2022

Title of Issue:

Use of Previous SLOs for Assessment of G and T Course Proposals

Description of Issue:

Likely due to problems arising from the peculiar nature of these General Education Outcomes, where they are offered through many Departments across nearly every College, the 2020 SLO revisions for the G and T General Education Outcomes resulted in revised SLOs that are overbroad and disconnected from their stated basis and purpose in the published descriptions of these outcomes. If this is not fixed, student learning and educational outcomes may be compromised.

We request that Committee A resume use of the prior SLOs in course approval until such time as new SLOs that do not have these problems are generated, should new SLOs be needed.

Rationale for Submission:

1. The ODU General Education website describes the Information Literacy & Research Outcome as follows:

The following statements serve as a framework for the discipline and can be used to inform the teaching of information literacy and research. Information literacy is an iterative process encompassing the discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced, consumed, and valued, and the ethical use of information in creating new knowledge. Information literacy considers the use of information, data, intellectual property, and scholarship. ODU believes that information literacy provides students with essential skills used for understanding of the wider world, for reaching informed views, and for playing a part as active citizens in society.

Starting with the second sentence: the 2020 revised G course SLOs no longer refer to or require teaching on iterative information literate processes, no longer require addressing "discovery" in the sense of academic or scientific research, and no longer require consideration of ethical issues in creation of new knowledge. With reference to the third sentence; the 2020 revised G course SLOs do not require consideration of data, intellectual property, or scholarship. The final sentence makes clear that a primary concern of the Outcome is preparing students to be able

to identify and fact-check disinformation or "fake news" on topics related to current events and to political participation, and this is not required by 2020 revised G course SLOs.

For reference:

| Original | Revised |
|---|---|
| A. Articulate and contextualize information needs, considering possible gaps in personal or existing knowledge and resources | A. Define the needs and types of information to address a topic or solve a problem |
| B. Search strategically in systems appropriate to the information needs | B. Conduct a strategic search for information |
| C. Articulate that research is an ongoing, non-linear process | --- |
| D. Evaluate and identify authoritative information according to the format, context, discipline, and practice | C. Critically evaluate information and its sources |
| E. Synthesize information in order to enhance understanding, inform creation of new works, or critique arguments | D. Synthesize information from multiple perspectives to enhance understanding of a topic or problem |
| F. Demonstrate an understanding of ethical and legal practices to employ when using, creating, and sharing information in changing technological environments | E. Use sources of information responsibly, safely, ethically, and legally |

2. The 2020 G course SLOs are overbroad and could be met by courses that do not provide significant instruction in Information Literacy as Information Literacy is understood in the Outcome description and in previous Outcome descriptions, SLOs, and other documentation. Although oversight by Committee A may prevent such courses from being approved, it is better to implement criteria that effectively communicate expectations to faculty developing courses. The previous SLOs better serve this purpose, as they

- require teaching on iterative information literate processes (SLO C),
- require addressing "discovery" in the sense of academic or scientific research (SLO D),
- require consideration of ethical issues in creation of new knowledge (SLO F),
- require consideration of data, intellectual property, or scholarship (SLO D), and
- are more likely to prepare students to be able to identify and fact-check disinformation or "fake news" on topics related to current events and to political

participation due to the focus on "using, creating, and sharing information in changing technological environments" (SLO F).

Since the previous SLOs were previously approved by the Faculty Senate and have been previously used to evaluate course proposals, returning to them also seems to be the least contentious and least controversial way to address the issue. If it is determined that the previous SLOs need to be revised, having the previous SLOs in place will ensure that a vetted and familiar instrument is in place so that the revision process is not rushed.

3. The ODU Undergraduate Catalog describes the Impact of Technology Outcome as follows:

It is important for students to understand not only how a technology functions, but also how technology affects society.

Courses in the impact of technology Way of Knowing are intended to develop students' abilities to make reasoned judgments about the impact of technological development upon world cultures and the environment as well as upon individuals and societies.

Starting with the first sentence: the 2020 revised T course SLOs no longer require instruction in how technology affects society. In the second sentence, it is stated that these courses should "develop students' abilities to make reasoned judgments about the impact of technological development upon world cultures," however the 2020 revised T course SLOs do not require instruction in cultural aspects or impacts of technology, and do not require consideration of technology outside of a US context. Finally, also in the second sentence, it is stated that these courses should "develop students' abilities to make reasoned judgments about ... the environment as well as upon individuals and societies," however the 2020 revised T course SLOs do not require instruction in all of these areas, but require only that at least one of the three areas be addressed. Also, the 2020 T course SLOs require that only costs or benefits of a given technology be addressed, and it is at least questionable whether "students' abilities to make reasoned judgments" in these areas can be developed without considering both costs and benefits.

For reference:

| Original | Revised |
|---|--|
| A. Describe the use and development of a given technology as a human and cultured activity. | A. Describe the use and development of a given technology within the context of a specified field. |

| | |
|--|--|
| B. Understand and describe the components, mechanisms, and function of a technological system, such as information and communication, finance, energy production, industrial production, food production, international trade, transportation, education, etc. | B. Describe the components, mechanisms, and function of a technological system. |
| C. Discuss the impact that a given technology may have on its users: how it may change users' conception of reality and what users' perceptions and biases are toward it. | --- |
| D. Understand and describe the potential consequences, both intended and unintended, of a given technology for individuals, nations, societies, and the environment. | C. Analyze the potential impacts, both intended and unintended, of a given technology on individuals, society, or the environment. |
| E. Express informed opinions about the cost/benefit relationship of a given technology, with considerations for development or controlled limitations. | D. Interpret the cost and/or benefit of a given technology on individuals, society, or the environment. |
| F. Understand and describe how technology has enabled the pace of change and interdependency that have accelerated globalization. | --- |
| G: Describe the role of technology in defining ideas of progress and modernism | --- |

4. The 2020 T course SLOs are overbroad and could be met by courses that do not provide significant training in Information Literacy as Information Literacy is understood in the Outcome description and in previous SLOs. Although oversight by Committee A may prevent such courses from being approved, it is better to implement criteria that effectively communicate expectations to faculty developing courses. The previous SLOs better serve this purpose, as they

- require instruction in how technology affects society (SLO D),
- require instruction in cultural aspects or impacts of technology (SLOs A, C, F, and G),
- require consideration of technology outside of a US context (SLOs D and F),

- require instruction in impacts of technology on the environment (SLO D), on individuals (SLOs C and D), and on societies (SLO D),
- and require consideration of both costs and benefits of a given technology (SLO E).

Since the previous SLOs were previously approved by the Faculty Senate and have been previously used to evaluate course proposals, returning to them also seems to be the least contentious and least controversial way to address the issue. If it is determined that the previous SLOs need to be revised, having the previous SLOs in place will ensure that a tested and familiar instrument is in place so that the revision process is not rushed.

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