

# Communication

## **Summary of Task Force findings on Communication:**

From the start of its discussions, the Task Force, with support from the AACU's *Greater Expectations*, recognized effective communication as a skill necessary for the continued civic, academic, and professional growth of UND's graduates. UND students, the Longitudinal Study found, also see improved communication as one of the most important goals of a General Education. While the Longitudinal Study found that students often thought that their communication skills had developed over the course of their undergraduate educations, faculty across campus expressed frustration to the Task Force with their students' writing abilities. Faculty also indicated that the Gen Ed program should direct more specific attention to helping UND students develop their speaking skills.

The Task Force determined that students should continue to take two semesters of Composition (English 110 and English 120 or 125). However, in addition, it was decided that students would take a course, under the Communication distribution, that stresses Oral Communication (and this course could be offered by the School of Communication, by the students' major, or by other programs). The Task Force also added an Advanced Communication special emphasis course in answer to the faculty's request that students have more practice developing their writing and speaking skills. Writing and Speaking cannot be learned once, early in a student's education, and then never practiced again. The Advanced Communication special emphasis course (at the 200-level or above) should provide students with more directed practice beyond the first year. An Advanced Communication special emphasis course may introduce students to the specific writing/speaking conventions of a particular discipline, or it may present an opportunity for students to practice the communication skills they will need in their civic and professional lives. (An Advanced Communication special emphasis course may be taken in the major or in other programs).

## **The New Essential Studies Communication Goal:**

You should be able to write and speak in civic, academic, and professional settings with a sense of purpose and audience.

Rationale: The ability to communicate effectively is a skill that is needed not only on the job but in personal and civic life. Communicating skillfully means being able to write and speak clearly for diverse audiences, and involves learning the conventions associated with each.

You will improve your communication skills when your ES courses ask you to practice the following, in written and oral assignments:

- Present information, express ideas, or construct arguments for particular purposes and audiences.

- Use critical thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to create effective written or oral presentations.
- Present research, cite sources, and format documents in ways that are consistent with different disciplinary standards

**The following criteria are designed to help faculty members, from a variety of disciplines, design an Oral Communication (O) course. These criteria will also give the GER committee a set of standards for the purposes of validation and revalidation:**

Recognizing that effective communication is learned through continued practice, oral communication courses place a strong emphasis on practice and process: instructors give regular feedback to students on their speaking and students are required to produce multiple oral presentations. Though these formal assignments certainly require students to work with particular content or information, they also demand that students are aware of rhetorical strategies and style of delivery.

To qualify as an Oral Communication (O) Course, the course syllabus will

1. Clearly state purpose of course as speaking intensive.
2. Demonstrate that at least 1/3 of assignments emphasize speaking skills.
3. Demonstrate a mechanism for feedback on oral presentation assignments.
4. Indicate that students will have time to use feedback to improve their oral communication abilities.
5. Demonstrate that course assignments emphasize the following:
  - Prior planning time for each oral presentation.
  - Appropriate content for topic and thoughtful construction of argument.
  - Awareness of audience.
  - Style of delivery (including verbal and non-verbal communication).
  - Instructor feedback and opportunities for improvement.

Note: Courses would *not* qualify for the O designation when oral communication is based solely on in-class discussions or on one final project.

Courses with special emphasis designations of U, G, Q, A, or C may not qualify as Oral Communication special emphasis courses.

Students must take three credit hours of O.

**The following criteria are designed to help faculty members, from a variety of disciplines, design an Advanced Communication (A) course. These criteria will also give the GER committee a set of standards for the purposes of validation and revalidation:**

Individual programs may decide to offer an Advanced Communication course for their students. However, other Advanced Communication courses will be open to students

from all majors. Whether the course is in the major or not, it will be important for Advanced Communication courses to draw students' attention to—and to help students practice—the civic, academic, or professional contexts within which the course is working.

Recognizing that effective communication is learned through continued practice, advanced communication courses place a strong emphasis on practice and process: instructors give regular feedback to students on their speaking and/or writing and students are required to produce multiple spoken presentations and/or written texts. Though these formal assignments certainly require students to work with particular content or information, they also demand that students are aware of rhetorical strategies and style of delivery.

To qualify as an Advanced Communication (A) Course, the course syllabus will

1. Clearly state purpose of course as writing and/or speaking intensive (an Advanced Communication course could emphasize both or either).
2. Demonstrate that at least 1/3 of assignments emphasize writing and/or speaking skills.
3. Demonstrate assignments which build on skills developed in early courses and which clearly emphasize advanced work in writing and/or oral communication: such as awareness of audience and purpose, argumentation and rhetorical effectiveness, and/or the communication conventions associated with particular civic, academic, and professional contexts.
4. Demonstrate a mechanism for feedback on the quality of communication on writing and/or oral presentation assignments.
5. Indicate that students will have time to use feedback to improve their writing and/or oral communication skills.

Note: Courses would *not* qualify for an A designation when oral communication is based solely on in-class discussions or one final presentation.

Courses would *not* qualify for an A designation when written communication is based solely on informal writing assignments or on one final paper.

To qualify as an Advanced Communication Course (A), the course must be at the 200 level or above. One course may earn both an A and C designations (Advanced Communication and Capstone designations) at the same time. However, courses with other special emphasis designations (O, U, G, and Q) may not qualify as Advanced Communication special emphasis courses.

Students must take three credit hours of A.

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