

GC Journeys Operational Definitions¹

First Year Seminars and Experiences²

Part of what makes the curriculum at GC unique are the embedded courses such as the GCSU 0001 (FYAS) and GC1Y courses. According to Kuh “first-year seminar makes anonymity impossible, fosters face-to-face interaction, and fuels feedback.” He adds that ideally First-Year Seminars and Experience should include sustained interactions with both a faculty member and an advisor, suggesting “a writing intensive first-year seminar” taught “by a faculty member (who also is the adviser for the students in the seminar),” where “advising is no longer a once-a-semester meeting with a person the student hardly knows, but an ongoing set of conversations about issues students are facing in real time.”

Definition

In order to offer meet the best practices and characteristics outlined for First-Year students by both AAC&U and the National Resource Center for First-Year Experiences, the First-Year Seminars and Experiences at GC will include both the GCSU 0001 and GC1Y courses.

Characteristics of First Year Seminars and Experience as a High Impact Practice^{3,4}

- Bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis.
- The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.
- First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.
- Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels
- Significant investment of time and effort by over an extended period of time
- Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Experiences with diversity
- Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
- Periodic structured opportunities to reflect on and integrate learning

Complete Your Journey: First Year Experience

The First Year Experience is one of three embedded experiences that is built into the GC curriculum. To “Complete your journey,” for First Year Experience, students need to complete their GCSU 0001 (FYAS) and GC1Y courses. Your instructors can help you determine what to include in your portfolio.

¹ Written/approved by GC Journeys Committee (Spring 2020)

² Kuh, George. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. AAC&U, 2008.

³ AAC&U, <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

⁴ “What Makes First-Year Seminar High-Impact: An Exploration of Effective Educational Practices.” *Reports on College Transitions*. Columbia, SC.: University of South Carolina National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition. 2017.

Contact: Your FYAS and/or GC1Y instructors

Career Milestones

At Georgia College, all undergraduate students are expected to complete a set of career planning benchmarks that follow a four-year career planning model. Known as the GC Career Planning Milestones, these benchmarks give students the opportunity to begin planning and preparing for their careers from their first day at GC.

While research has demonstrated that students discussing career plans with a faculty member and advisor is directly related to an increase on first year retention, career planning at GC engenders several other positive attributes. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), “The skills that students learn in career preparation experiences appear to increase their time-management skills and self-discipline (Kane, Healy, & Henson, 1992; Taylor, 1988) as well as increase critical thinking and communication skills (Maskooki, Rama, & Raghunandan, 1998; Raymond, McNabb, & Matthaei, 1993). Career preparation participants not only gain more knowledge about themselves but they also gain valuable knowledge about their intended vocation and how they may (or may not) fit into that vocation.”⁵

Definition

The [Career Planning Milestones](#) program provides all undergraduate students with a checklist of foundational career development activities that increase their competitiveness for internships, scholarships, campus leadership roles, research experiences, fellowships, full-time jobs, and/or graduate/professional school. These activities include career exploration through an assessment, resume/curriculum vitae writing, mock interviews, career planning, and online networking platforms such as LinkedIn and Handshake, Georgia College’s job and internship database. The Career Center tracks all career activities completed through our programs and services. In Year 1, complete the Focus Career Assessment; in Year 2, complete the resume review and linked in profile; in Year 3, complete the strategic career plan and mock interview; and in Year 4, complete the senior check in.

Characteristics of Career Milestones as a Transformative Learning Experience^{6,7}

- Students are effortful, reflective, open to feedback, and engaged in their own career development.
- Students talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
- Students gain an understanding, clarification, and refinement of future career and postgraduation plans.
- Students learn how to connect their skills to those needed by employers and graduate/professional school programs through immediate feedback from professional career advisors.

⁵ “NSSE Conceptual Framework (2013).” *The National Survey of Student Engagement*. Bloomington, IN: Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University. http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/conceptual_framework_2013.cfm

⁶ NSSE, *ibid*.

⁷ Kuh, George. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. AAC&U, 2008.

- Students graduate with a competent ability to communicate the value of their degree in the context of their desired career goals.

Complete Your Journey: Career Planning Milestones

The Career Planning Milestones is the second embedded Transformative Learning Experience. To “Complete Your Journey:” Career Planning Milestones, students need to meet the Career Planning Milestones for each year (see info graphic below). The Career Center will track students’ completion of career planning activities. More information can be found here on how to complete the Career Planning Milestones: <http://www.gcsu.edu/career/milestones#>. Career advisors will help you determine which artifacts best represent your capstone experience and should be included in your portfolio.

Contact: GC Career Center, career.center@gcsu.edu

down



CAREER PLANNING MILESTONES

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Capstone

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork.⁸ According to Kuh, "all students should do such work to be prepared to navigate the post-college world of complex, unscripted problems."

Definition:

A Capstone Course is a course offered to undergraduate students to capture a culminating project or exhibition (e.g., a thesis, performance, project) that serves as a final academic experience.

Characteristics of a Capstone as a Transformative Learning Experience:

1. Scaffolded courses in a sequence lead up to the capstone course
2. Students required to synthesize and apply what they have learned as a culminating experience
3. Faculty guidance and feedback in the course of an independent or collaborative research project enriches learning as represented by student self-reported gains
4. Student reflect on the process

Suggestions (Hauhart and Grahe 2015, Kuh, 2008):

- Early, clear communication of the nature of the capstone experience and ... sequential steps that the major paper or major project will entail.
- Define the major paper or project in concrete terms
- Incorporate appropriate supplemental activities into the capstone course.
- Select a suitable minimum page length for the major paper or research report.
- Students who do a capstone seminar that requires a final product or performance gain more in desired areas compared with their peers whose capstones do not require a final product or performance

Complete Your Journey: Capstone

The Capstone is the final embedded experience built into GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey" for Capstone, you must successfully complete the capstone course for your program/major. Experiences will be determined by the requirements of your department/major. Faculty members mentoring such experiences will help you determine which artifacts best represent your capstone experience and should be included in portfolio.

Contact: Your academic advisor or your academic program head

⁸ AAC&U, <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

Internship

Definition:

Internships: Internships are typically one-time work or service experiences related to the student's major or career goal. The internship plan generally involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internships can be paid or unpaid and the student may or may not receive academic credit for performing the internship.

Co-Op: Cooperative education programs, or co-ops, provide students with multiple periods of work in which the work is related to the student's major or career goal. The typical program plan is for students to alternate terms of full-time classroom study with terms of full-time, discipline-related employment. Since program participation involves multiple work terms, the typical participant will work three or four work terms, thus gaining a year or more of career-related work experience before graduation. Virtually all co-op positions are paid and the vast majority involve some form of academic credit.⁹

- Academic departments will be responsible for identifying courses that fit this definition and ensuring that they are coded (and remain coded) correctly.

Characteristics of an Internship as a Transformative Learning Experience

An internship should include “supervision and self-study that allows students to ‘learn by doing’ and to reflect upon that learning in a way that achieves certain learning goals and objectives.”¹⁰:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides knowledge gained in the classroom.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the coursework
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional experience
6. There is routine feedback by the employer
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.¹¹

Complete Your Journey: Internship

Internships are one of the optional transformative learning experiences in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey” for internships, you must sign up and complete an approved internship experience for academic credit at GC. These may be supported by the academic department or

⁹ NACE Internship and Co-Op Survey (2016): <https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/content/static-assets/downloads/executive-summary/2016-internship-co-op-survey-executive-summary.pdf>

¹⁰ O’Neill, Nancy. “Internships as a High Impact Practice.” *Peer Review* 12.4 (2010).

¹¹ NACE Position Statement: U.S. Internships. <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/advocacy/position-statements/position-statement-us-internships/>

may be secured with assistance from GC's Career Center. The Career Center advises students to begin their internship search at least 4 – 6 months before their desired start date. The Career Center uses Handshake to promote local, regional, and national internship opportunities to students. By completing the Career Planning Milestones, GC students will have the advantage when they apply for competitive internships. Artifacts may include reflections, work products from the internship, supervisor evaluations, internship experience surveys, final projects, etc. Your internship coordinator/mentor will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Contact: [GC Career Center](#), (career.center@gcsu.edu), or your academic program head

Undergraduate Research/Mentored Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors (MURACE)

-An undergraduate research course is primarily focused on an undergraduate research experience where the students conduct research or creative project. Academic departments will be responsible for identifying courses that fit this definition and ensuring that they are coded (and remain coded) correctly.

Definition:

Undergraduate Research: The Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR) defines it as "An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original, intellectual, or creative contribution to the discipline(s)."

- Academic departments will be responsible for identifying courses that fit this definition and ensuring that they are coded (and remain coded) correctly.

[Mission Statement of Successful Undergraduate Research at Georgia College](#)¹²

Georgia College aspires to graduate students with creative and problem-solving dispositions that prepare them to be the next leaders of the free world. As the state's designated public liberal arts university, Georgia College connects teaching excellence with learning beyond the classroom to provide unique UR experiences for students. A small student to faculty ratio coupled with student-centered faculty provides a platform for a faculty mentor to engage student-scholars in inquiry investigations that make an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.

Characteristics of Undergraduate Research as a Transformative Learning Experience

1. **Mentorship:** Includes collaborative, serious interactions with clear goals, and a focus on the student learning process; intellectual engagement of the student and disciplinary socialization.
2. **Originality-** Meaningful contribution by the student.
3. **Acceptability:** Employs techniques and methodologies that are both appropriate and recognized in the discipline. Includes a reflective/synthetic component that is appropriate to the discipline.
4. **Dissemination:** Ideally, there needs to be a final, tangible product for which both the process and results are peer-reviewed, critiqued, etc. We recognized that UR is a continuum between student (process centered) and outcome (product centered) activities and we value and recognize all student-initiated participation and inquiry in and outside the classroom.¹³

Complete Your Journey: Undergraduate Research/MURACE

Undergraduate Research is one of the optional transformative learning experiences in GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey," for mentored undergraduate research, please see

¹² <https://www.gcsu.edu/murace>

¹³ Richards, Brown, Manoylov, Busch, and Lewis. "[A Vision for Undergraduate Research at Georgia College.](#)" 2011.

your faculty member with whom you are conducting research. Ask about getting course credit for research (you should be able to even sign up for 0 credit hours if you are volunteering). You can seek out these experiences throughout your time at GC, and even join an undergraduate research circle. Visit [MURACE](#) for more details or talk to your academic department chair or Dean. Mentors should help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Contact: Dr. Doreen Sams (MURACE) doreen.sams@gcsu.edu

Study Abroad/Study Away

“Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore ‘difficult differences’ such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.”¹⁴ The International Education Center of Georgia College promotes international and cross-cultural learning and understanding, plus inclusion, and the importance and benefits of diversity.

Definition

Credit-bearing in-classroom and out-of-classroom field/experiential activities occurring domestically or internationally that allow students to apply disciplinary knowledge to new, complex situations beyond the classroom.

Characteristics of Study Abroad as a Transformative Learning Experience¹⁵

- Encountering the complexities of global issues
- Application of disciplinary knowledge in a global context
- Interacting with other cultures
- Guided reflection throughout the experience

Complete Your Journey: Study Abroad/Study Away

Study Abroad/Study Away programs are one of the optional transformative learning experiences available in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey” with Study Abroad/Study Away, simply enroll in and complete a Study Abroad program/course. Artifacts may include itineraries, reflections, coursework completed for the study abroad course, journals, final papers and/or projects, digital stories, etc. Faculty members mentoring such experiences will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio. For more information, visit the International Education Center in the Bone House, or at <https://www.gcsu.edu/international>

Contact: Liz Havey, Assistant Director of Education Abroad

liz.havey@gcsu.edu

¹⁴ AAC&U, <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

¹⁵ Stebleton, Michael J.; Soria, Krista M.; Cherney, Blythe T., “The High Impact of Education Abroad: College Students' Engagement in International Experiences and the Development of Intercultural Competencies.” *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*. (2012): 1-24.

Community Based Engaged Learning/Service Learning

Overview

AAC&U defines service learning/community-based learning as “field-based ‘experiential learning’ with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community.”¹⁶

Definition

At Georgia College, Community-based Engaged Learning (CbEL) courses require student participation in service projects or community engagement (either on campus or through institutional partnerships with off-campus organizations) and integrate the service experience into course content.

Characteristics of CbEL as a Transformative Learning Experience¹⁷

1. Students integrate theory and practice
2. Students have direct experiences in community settings
3. Students participate in mutually beneficial partnerships with community organizations
4. Students critically reflect on their community-based experiences

Complete Your Journey: Community-based Engaged Learning (CbEL)

Community-based Engaged Learning is one of the optional transformative learning experiences available in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey,” simply enroll and complete any faculty sponsored ENGAGE or CbEL course experience at Georgia College. You are encouraged to seek out these special courses if you are interested in community service, civic engagement, and collaborative partnerships within your local community. Faculty members mentoring CbEL experiences will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Contact:

¹⁶ <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

¹⁷ Georgia College ENGAGE: Building a Culture of Engaged Learning (2017).

Intensive Leadership Experience

[The Office of Leadership Programs](#) maintains institution-wide responsibility for management, coordination, and development of all Georgia College leadership programs and initiatives. Beyond Georgia College's core leadership programs, which are directed and administered by the Office of Leadership Programs, the staff works collaboratively with members of GC's faculty and staff to develop affiliate programs.¹⁸ Affiliate Programs are courses and student programs that engage with leadership-related topics, including mentorship, civic engagement, social justice and inclusion, strategic thought, and global citizenship, and have as their goal developing students as citizens and leaders for the public good.

Definition

An "intensive leadership program" is a designated Georgia College core leadership program or affiliate leadership program that has integrated GC's Core Leadership Competencies into the students' experience and prepares students as leaders for the public good.¹⁹

Characteristics of an Intensive Leadership Experience as a Transformative Learning Experience

1. **Learned.** Leadership experiences designed as "transformative" should integrate each of Georgia College's Core Leadership Competencies into the students' experience. The Core Leadership Competencies unite all of Georgia College's leadership development efforts and represent the essential skills that members of the faculty and staff must integrate into their leadership development programs at GC.²⁰
2. **Practiced.** Leadership experiences designed as "transformative" should allow students to create at least two artifacts showcasing their leadership that can be documented.
3. **Reflected Upon.** Leadership experiences designated as "transformative" must provide leadership development consultations/reflections.

Complete Your Journey: Intensive Leadership Experiences

Intensive Leadership Experiences are one of the optional Transformative Leadership Experiences available in GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey," participate in a core or affiliate leadership program. Students may review their options and choose from a range of Georgia College's leadership programs by visiting gcsu.edu/leadership. For questions about curricular and co-curricular leadership experiences, contact the Leadership Office.

Contact: Dr. Harold Mock, Director of Leadership Programs (harold.mock@gcsu.edu)

¹⁸ "Leadership Programs" in Georgia College Undergraduate Catalog (2018); available online at catalog.gcsu.edu.

¹⁹ Harold Mock, *Leadership Development Across the Curriculum: A White Paper on Leadership Development at Georgia College* (2018); available online at gcsu.edu/leadership/affiliate.

²⁰ Georgia College's Core Leadership Competencies are based on the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect Global Competency Framework. On Georgia College's processes and methods, see Mock, *Leadership Development Across the Curriculum*. On competency-based leadership development, see Heather Barnfield, et al., "Define. Distill. Deploy: Adopting 21st-Century Competencies for High-Impact Talent" (Korn Ferry Institute, 2014); Robert W. Lombardo and Michael M. Eichinger, *The Leadership Machine: Architecture to Develop Learners for Any Future*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Lominger International, 2002); and *idem.*, *For Your Improvement: For Learners, Managers, Mentors, and Feedback Givers*, 5th ed. (Lominger International, 2009).