

K-State 8 Tagging Criteria and Guidelines Task Force

Report and Recommendations

April 6, 2012

Background

The K-State 8 General Education Program was approved by Faculty Senate in May 2009. In the Fall of 2009, faculty were asked to begin a review of the courses offered by their departments, and assign a tag if a principal student learning outcome of the course focused on one of the K-State 8 areas. A single course could receive at most two tags. Departments were given until March 2011 to finalize the tagging process. In the fall of 2011, the K-State 8 General Education Program was officially implemented.

Initial implementation of the K-State 8 General Education Program led to three major concerns: the consistency of tagging across departments and colleges, the number of tags that could be assigned to a one-credit course, and the availability of a sufficient number of tagged courses in different programs. Faculty Senate leadership requested that the Faculty Senate President and Provost and Senior Vice President appoint a joint taskforce to consider these and other issues.

Task Force

The Task Force included representatives from the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, the K-State 8 Faculty Council and the K-State 8 College Council. The members of the Task Force and their affiliations were:

Ruth Dyer, Chair, Office of Provost
Dave Nichols, College of Agriculture; K-State 8 Faculty Council
Lynn Ewanow, College of Architecture, Planning and Design; K-State 8 College Council
Andy Bennett, College of Arts and Sciences, Natural Sciences; Faculty Senate Academic Affairs
Louise Benjamin, College of Arts and Sciences, Social Sciences
Alison Wheatley, College of Arts and Sciences, Humanities; K-State 8 College Council
Anand Desai, College of Business Administration; K-State 8 College Council
Jackie Spears, College of Education; Faculty Senate Academic Affairs
Yacoub Najjar, College of Engineering; K-State 8 Faculty Council
Betsy Barrett, College of Human Ecology; K-State 8 Faculty Council
Rick Zajac, College of Technology and Aviation; Faculty Senate Academic Affairs

Resource personnel for the Task Force included Vicki Clegg, Center for Advancement of Teaching and Learning, Fred Burrack, Assessment, and Ken Stafford, Information Technology.

The charge was to:

- Develop recommendations for a set of defined criteria for inclusion of a course within the K-State 8 General Education Program.
- Consider if changes are needed to the current review process that uses the Course and Curriculum Change process to add, delete or modify K-State 8 tags associated with courses. Both the process for initial review and approval and the process for periodic review and continued approval or modifications required to retain a specific tag should be considered.
- Consider options for addressing any constraints that may exist within specific academic programs or colleges

The Task Force held its first meeting on November 4, 2011, and it formed three work groups to accomplish its charge:

- Tagging criteria and guidelines
- Initial tagging and periodic review process
- Options for units in implementing K-State 8

On the basis of the discussions of the working groups and feedback received from faculty members and department heads on interim proposed recommendations, a final set of recommendations has been developed. In making these recommendations, the Task Force acknowledges that individual faculty members are in the best position to identify whether a given course meets the goals of the K-State 8 General Education Program. However, department course and curriculum committees, college course and curriculum committees, and Faculty Senate Academic Affairs need shared guidelines to evaluate the courses proposed to receive a tag. In addition, these shared guidelines can contribute to the development of a more coherent general education program.

Shared Guidelines: Tagging Recommendations & Rubric

For a course to be tagged, it should contain a significant amount of material addressing the tagged area. The grading for the class should also assess the material for the tag. The recommended minimum amounts of both content and assessment necessary to justify each tag are identified in the following table:

Credit Hours	1	2	3	4	5
Content	100% of content	60% of content	40% of content	33% of content	25% of content
Assessment	100% of grade	50% of grade	33% of grade	25% of grade	25% of grade

These criteria imply that only courses with three or more credit hours can receive more than one tag. A syllabus that identifies the content and assessment related to each tag should accompany all requests for adding a tag to a course. . Student learning outcomes, classroom hours on topics, and/or other content measures as designated by the college can be used to identify content addressing the tag. A maximum of 200 words of narrative material may be included in cases where the connection between the syllabus and the tag are not readily apparent.

For an *experience* (e.g. study abroad, internships or service learning) to have a tag, it should include at least 60 hours where the student is actively engaged in material related to that tag.

Study of Initial Tagging and Establishing a Review Process for Tagging

Although the initial tagging process provided a starting point, comparisons across departments and colleges of tags assigned to courses led to concerns regarding the use of common criteria in selecting a tag. Providing clearer definitions of each of the eight areas combined with the shared guidelines for tagging should assist individual faculty members, department course and curriculum committees, and college course and curriculum committees with making decisions

about course tagging, and should assist the University as a whole in building a consistent and coherent general education program. The intent is to keep the identification and assignment of tags at the department level and approval at the college level. Faculty Senate Academic Affairs will provide a final level of review, but, in general, will not become more involved unless there are differences across colleges about the assignment of a tag. Finally, the Task Force suggests that all academic units use the revised definitions and tagging rubric to review and, if needed, make changes to currently tagged courses by using the expedited review process for course and curriculum changes. Once this review is completed, changes in tags and/or tags for new courses will become part of the Course and Program Approval Process,

Review of Initial Tagging (1 September 2012 – 1 June 2013)*

1. Department faculty members will use the shared guidelines to review all current tags and communicate any changes (additions or deletions of tags) via the expedited review process for Course and Curriculum changes. These changes must be submitted by November 1, 2012.
2. Each College's Course and Curriculum committee will complete its review and approval by February 15, 2013.
3. Tags will be published with the Fall 2013 course schedule for use during the Spring enrollment period for Fall 2013.

There may be challenges presented by this timeline, and the appropriate personnel in each of the Dean's Offices will work with departments to manage the transition.

*Timeline will be dependent on Faculty Senate approval schedule

Faculty Review Process for Tagging (after March 1, 2013)

4. Review of tags will be required if student learning outcomes change or if the course emphasis changes dramatically. Department faculty members will be responsible for conducting these reviews, as needed.
5. Assigning a tag to a proposed new or existing course will follow the non-expedited review process.
6. Removing a tag from a course will follow the expedited review process.

Revised Wording for Aesthetic Experience and Interpretive Understanding

7. Revise wording related to one of the K-State 8 areas:
 - a. Change the title of "Aesthetic Experience and Interpretive Understanding" to "Aesthetic Interpretation"
Rationale: Some courses appear to have been tagged when there was only "interpretive understanding" within the course content and no "aesthetic experience."
 - b. Change the beginning of the first sentence in the description of this area from "Courses and experiences in aesthetic experience and interpretive understanding provide students with the opportunity ..." to "Courses and experiences in the

interpretive understanding of aesthetic experience provide students with the opportunity”

Rationale: The change suggested to this sentence will help clarify the intent of this K-State area.

Options for Units in Implementing K-State 8

In implementing the K-State 8 General Education Program individual academic units may experience unique difficulties in ensuring that their students are able to satisfy the new requirements. Conditions where the K-State 8 General Education Program may cause increased constraints include:

- Units for which there is an insufficient number of options for a student to take courses that include a particular tag;
- Units whose curricular requirements only allow for a limited number of electives;
- Units where students enter degree programs with a significant amount of non-standard transfer credit from other institutions.

As an example, during the Fall 2011 semester the “Global Perspectives” course options offered to students on the K-State Salina campus represented less than 5% of those offered on the Manhattan campus.

Recommendations to Assist Units with Constraints in Meeting K-State 8 Requirements:

1. Allow course tagging to vary by specific course sections and by focus. Where a particular course allows the instructor the flexibility to strategically direct course content and course assignments to satisfy the proposed criteria for a critically needed tag, it should be possible for individual sections of the course to be tagged differently from other sections of that course. Of particular interest is the ability to tag topically focused sections of English, Speech, and Communications at one campus differently from their counterparts at another campus, based on the local instructors’ choice of focus materials. Geographical separation and differences in mode of delivery (distance vs. traditional) may be useful in resolving potential confusion between sections of the same course that are tagged differently.
2. Encourage the development or modification of targeted courses to provide additional direct opportunities for students to earn critically needed tags, consistent with the proposed tagging criteria.