

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 60-21

(Voting Units: Academic)

"PROCEDURE FOR PILOT TESTING MODIFICATIONS TO THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM"

Rationale

The senate has the authority to review and establish policy and procedures on all curricular matters per their constitution, and this authority includes oversight of any proposed general education models. In an effort to allow for pilot testing changes or new education models that could inform future general education programs, and to encourage educational innovation, it is proposed that a general protocol for such pilot efforts be established.

Scope

This procedure applies only to temporary pilot studies of proposed programmatic changes to the current general education model at Michigan Tech (whatever the current general education model may be at the time of the pilot proposal).

Experiments within individual courses are outside the scope of this procedure, but must still abide by Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures as appropriate.

Procedures:

Proposals for pilot studies related to general education may be submitted by academic units or by coalitions made up of representatives from academic units.

Proposals will follow the general guidelines outlined below and will be submitted following the detailed guidelines and timelines developed by the Provost's Office. The implementation plan for any pilot will be developed in coordination with the Registrar's office.

Approval of a "Limited Pilot" (see definitions below) rests with the Provost. An "Advanced Pilot" would additionally require review and approval by the Senate Curricular Policy and the Finance and Institutional Planning Committees.

In reviewing proposals for approval, the Provost's Office will take into consideration the total number of students in all ongoing pilots operating under this policy and the alignment of the proposal with the university's mission, strategic priorities, and any active initiatives.

After piloting, any requests for formal adoption and permanent program changes would follow the senate process for program proposals.

Definitions

- Limited Pilot: a proposal that involves piloting not more than 6 credits worth of modifications to the current General Education structure or requirements OR limited modifications that do not change the overall structure or requirements of general education (i.e., they bend but do not break any current rules).
 - For example, curating courses from existing approved Gen Ed lists would be a modification that does not alter the overall structure of the program. In this instance, those curated courses would not count towards this credit cap as long as current distribution requirements can be met by students.
 - Piloted components would replace a defined portion of the existing general education program, in which case students would complete the remaining parts of the general education program as specified for non-participants.
- Advanced Pilot: a proposal to pilot a combination of previously piloted components (with, or without new components) that result in a total of more than 6 credits of changed requirements to the General Education program.
 - As above, piloted components would replace defined portions of the existing general education program, in which case students would complete any remaining parts of the general education program as specified for non-participants. Should a full program be approved for piloting, participating students will be considered to have fully met their general education requirements by the successful completion of the piloted version of general education.

Requirements

A. For piloting modifications to existing general education model

A pilot study that seeks to alter or replace an existing component of the current general education model will:

1. Be limited in size to include no more than 15% of the incoming first-year class at the outset of the pilot.
 - a. As part of a pilot proposal, the pilot team will identify the best method for selecting a sample population. Students will be invited to participate, and will be able to accept or decline the invitation.
 - b. The pilot study will not add additional cohorts (e.g., another incoming class of first-year students) unless a new pilot request is submitted and approved.
2. Be conducted with an equivalent comparison group.
 - a. Proposals should include a rationale of how the comparison group will be defined and selected.
3. Require no more credits for a pilot-cohort student to complete their degree program than a non-participating student in the same major and who entered in the same catalog year.
4. Be assessed for student learning.
5. Be responsive to the General Education Council and Assessment Council. This will entail:

- a. a notification of the intent to conduct a pilot study.
- b. the opportunity for the councils to offer feedback on the study proposal and the study design.
- c. annual updates on the pilot study, while the study is in progress, that include assessment data for the pilot cohort and the comparison group.
6. Be conducted with IRB approval and training as appropriate for the proposed pilot.
7. Be approved by the provost, and applicable senate committees, prior to implementation and after IRB review of the pilot study.
8. Submit annual and final reports that include summative evaluation of the pilot study and its success to the Provost, Senate, and the General Education and Assessment Councils.

At any point during the pilot-testing period, students in the pilot cohort must be allowed to opt out of the pilot version of general education. Students who opt out will be moved to the existing general education program with no loss of earned credit or progress toward degree. Students in a single-course pilot may drop a pilot course following standard university course-drop procedures and withdrawal timelines.

B. Proposals for piloting rule exceptions to an existing general education program

Existing programs seeking to work mostly within the existing (not a pilot) general education model are considered Limited Pilots and may submit a proposal to the Provost's Office.

Such proposals will be limited in scope (i.e., bending, not breaking, the rules of the existing general education model) and must be in line with the basic concepts of providing a broad and interdisciplinary general education to students and preserve options for students' exploration and choice.

- Only existing programs may request and pilot rule exceptions (not eligible to be combined with a new degree program proposal).
 - The purpose of this is to separate the approval of a degree program and approval of an exception, to facilitate student transfer into the program (e.g., someone who has completed the normal general education requirements at Michigan Tech or through a transfer agreement), and to ensure there is an equivalent degree program that meets normal internal degree requirements should the pilot program be discontinued.
- The pilot exception trial will not add additional cohorts (e.g., first-time freshmen) unless a new pilot request is submitted and approved.
- During the pilot-testing period the degree program will be eligible to request degree audit waivers for students participating in the pilot test. Requests can be made to the Registrar's Office who will seek approval from the Provost's Office.