

## **BACKGROUND**

Communication and Critical Thinking are essential to the general education experience of every student at RIT, and every general education course provides learning experiences with both of these skills. As such, all general education courses are aligned to at least one Communication and one Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcome, thereby ensuring that these elements (known as the *Essential Elements of General Education*) are embedded throughout the general education curriculum. However, some general education courses may be ill-suited to the assessment of the Essential Elements.

## **RESPONSE**

GEC has made the following determinations:

1) GEC recognizes that certain courses may not have sufficient time to assess both Essential Elements of General Education, but do provide a significant general education experience for our students. Therefore, an “Essential Element Exemption” may be granted in the case that a course meets the traditional definition of general education ([see NYSED guidelines](#)) but constraints related to curricular opportunity make assessment of one of the Essential Elements problematic.

2) The following criteria will not be considered as a factor in the exemption of a general education course from the Essential Elements:

- Course or section size
- Anything related to individual faculty (workload, teaching or assessment methods)
- Mode of instruction

## **ESSENTIAL ELEMENT EXEMPTION PROTOCOL**

### **Step 1: Departments Request Exemption**

Departments can request in writing an exemption from one category of the Essential Elements (Communication OR Critical Thinking.) The request should outline the rationale for an exemption. The exemption applies only to the Essential Element Student Learning Outcomes and not to Perspective Student Learning Outcomes.

### **Step 2: Exemption Approval**

GEC will review and approve, if applicable, an Essential Element Exemption in conjunction with the normal general education course approval process.