Language Other Than English (LOTE) Requirement Working Group Charge

A tension exists between the desire to ensure students achieve a foundation in the cultural understanding that comes from learning a foreign language and the inclusion of computer languages in the original GE program as satisfying LOTE. At UC Merced approximately two-thirds of incoming students satisfy LOTE through alternate means, such as high school coursework or a Seal of Biliteracy. Of the remainder, approximately two thirds satisfy the requirement through computer programming languages. While faculty survey results broadly support the purpose of the language requirement as cultural competency and a desire for a single university-wide GE requirement, as opposed to a school- or major-based requirement, removing computer language courses from this list would potentially require students in majors substantially impacted by a large number of units to take two additional courses, which could negatively impact their time to degree.

Charge for the UC Merced LOTE Requirement Working Group

The UC Merced LOTE Requirement Working Group is charged with reviewing the current approach to LOTE and developing recommendations for this requirement moving forward. In conducting their work, the Working Group should review relevant campus data, benchmark against other Universities, and deeply consider the purpose and intended outcomes of the LOTE requirement.

Key Responsibilities

The key responsibility for the working group is to develop a set of recommendations for the LOTE requirement moving forward. The following should be considered to inform this process:

a. Review the purpose and learning outcomes of the LOTE requirement
b. Review student outcomes data related to LOTE
c. Review faculty input from spring 2026 GE survey related to LOTE
d. Develop an understanding of the implications of changes to the requirements for students' time to degree
e. Develop an understanding of degree requirements for high-unit majors
f. Consult with campus stakeholders as needed, including GE Chair and DUEEC
g. Refer to other relevant data provided by the Assessment Specialist in DUE or the Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support
h. Consider alternative ways to meet cultural-related education as part of General Education

Deliverable

The LOTE Requirement Working Group will begin its work in August 2026 and will produce recommendations related to LOTE by December 11, 2026. These recommendations will be presented to the DUE Executive Committee and Undergraduate Council for their consideration.

Membership

Membership of the LOTE Requirement Working Group will include:

- Representative of each school Executive Committee
- Literatures, Languages and Cultures faculty representative
- CSE faculty representative
- Senate EDI Committee representative
- Representatives from both UGC and DUEEC
- Bobcat Advising representative
- Academic Advising representative from each school
- Student representative

The group will elect a chair or co-chairs to convene and facilitate their work.

Timeline

June-August: members contacted and membership confirmed

August-November: working group meetings and consultations

December 11: final recommendations due to UGC and DUEEC