1. Definition and Overview

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defines Diversity and Global Learning (D&GL) as “courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own,” often exploring “difficult differences’ such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power” (https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips).

D&GL courses provide opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection, research, and critical thinking to better understand diversity and culture in the United States, around the world, or both. They often require students to go beyond the classroom and texts to interact with peers and groups from different backgrounds, to explore unfamiliar places, and to apply new perspectives to analyze familiar situations.

D&GL courses thrive in classrooms that are safe spaces for students to explore themselves and others who differ from them. Instructors consciously engage student diversity across social identities to best develop students and their experiences in rigorously-applied subject matter.

D&GL cuts across all disciplines and is equally interdisciplinary. Faculty engage academic subjects through various experiential and contextual perspectives, and students gain a rich, personal understanding of diversity and the world to enhance critical thinking. As a result, students will be better able to interact and communicate ethically and effectively in diverse contexts with diverse individuals and groups.

2. Best-Practices Guidelines

The minimum standard features of a Diversity and Global Learning-intensive course, based upon national best practices, are as follows:

- **Diversity Content**: the course will provide content that focuses explicitly on historically disenfranchised social identity groups in the United States or on national identity groups external to the United States, or both.

- **Reflection on Learning**: students will engage in deep reflection and exhibit self-awareness through written work and/or other media about what they have learned about their social identity or identities as related to course content.
Co-curricular Assignment: students will participate in at least one co-curricular activity outside of class to interact with peers or groups from different backgrounds, to explore unfamiliar places or to apply new perspectives to analyze familiar situations.

Research: students will conduct research to better understand diversity in the United States, around the world, or both (as related to course content).

Infusion: diversity- or globalization-related topics will be infused throughout the course (as contrasted with being highlighted only in one or two modules or sessions).

In-Class Discussion: faculty will facilitate discussions that invite students to share their experiences, analyses, and reflections to deepen their knowledge and to improve their communication skills.

3. Learning Outcomes for Diversity and Global Learning

National best practices recommend that D&GL-intensive courses deliver the learning summarized by one or both of two AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs): Intercultural Knowledge and Competence and/or Global Learning. DG&L course syllabi ideally should reference and use the ELO VALUE Rubric for Intercultural Knowledge and Competence and/or Global Learning.

D&GL course syllabi should integrate the very broad ELOs into the discipline-specific learning outcomes for the course. The ELOs should be expressed in the terms of that discipline or profession and serve the delivery of disciplinary knowledge and skills.

Individual faculty may choose whether or not to incorporate one or more of the other ELOs, as appropriate to the discipline, and integrated into the disciplinary or professional content or used as vehicle for that content. Other ELOs that may be especially relevant to D&GL courses include: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Civic Knowledge and Engagement, and Ethical Reasoning and Action.

4. Suggested Resources

The AAC&U website has a wealth of relevant resources, including:

- Session Materials and Resources: Global Learning in College 2013 http://www.aacu.org/meetings/global/13/resources
- Session Materials and Resources: Diversity, Learning, and Student Success 2014 http://www.aacu.org/meetings/dlss/2014/resources

Also see: