



Appendix E

9/15/20

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS

General Education Requirements for Associate Degree Programs, including Revisions to Senate Policy Appendix A.2 General Education (Associate Degree)

(Legislative)

Implementation: Upon approval by the Senate

Introduction and Rationale

In 2015, the University Faculty Senate approved a legislative report put forward by the General Education Taskforce on the Revision to the General Education Curriculum. This report included 6 recommendations. Recommendation 6, part (e) specifically addressed how Integrative Studies courses could be used for Associate Degree students.

Recommendation 6: (e) allow an Integrative Studies course to satisfy the flexible 3 credits of exploration within the Associate Degree General Education curriculum.

Integrative Studies was a new and innovative change introduced in the General Education update. Since that time, the primary implementation strategy has been the creation, development, and delivery of Inter-domain courses across the University. Of these 21 unique associate degree programs, nineteen prescribe specific, limited ways for fulfilling the single General Education requirement that students might be able to complete with an inter-domain course.

The result is that nearly all Associate Degree students cannot engage in the integrative studies innovation in our General Education program. Additionally, this has complicated implementation and course offering options for smaller campuses where a limited number of General Education courses can be offered, which further restricts Associate Degree students' course selections. Unfortunately, this can encourage Associates Degree students to enroll in General Education courses outside of Penn State.

A second recommendation included in this report addresses a historical limitation that does not allow Health and Wellness (GHW, formerly GHA) courses to satisfy the extra three credit of Knowledge Domain requirement for Associate Degree students. The committee recommends removing this restriction to bring Health and Wellness into alignment with the other areas of our General Education program.

Recommendations

We recommend updating the General Education curriculum for Associate Degree students as follows:

- Allowing up to six credits of Inter-domain courses to satisfy any of the Knowledge Domain requirements.
- Allow GHW courses for the extra three credits of Knowledge Domains. It must be acknowledged that this change will minimally impact students, for the very reason limiting Inter-domain courses to this requirement was problematic. As stated above, this requirement is prescribed by the vast major of associate degree programs, but it removes an inconsistency that does not align with Health and Wellness as a Knowledge Domain within General Education.

BULLETIN ENTRIES

Revised Policy/Policies

Please note that the following contains bold text for additions and strikeouts indicating deleted text. Deleted text is notated with [Delete] [End Delete]. Added text is notated with [Add] [End Add].

The associate degree General Education program consists of 21 credits that are distributed among two General Education components:

Foundations courses in writing, speaking, and quantification (6 credits)

Knowledge Domains in the Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences (15 credits).

A restriction (commonly referred to as the General Education Firewall) is placed on students in majors that are closely linked to the Knowledge Domains areas of Natural Sciences, Arts, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences, in order to ensure that they participate in the full breadth of General Education. These students may not use a course in their academic major to satisfy one of the Knowledge Domains area requirements. For example, an ECON major may not use an ECON course to fulfill their social and behavioral sciences requirement.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

FOUNDATIONS

Total 6 credits

Requirement: Writing/Speaking (GWS)* – 3 Credits

Requirement: Quantification (GQ)* – 3 Credits

*Requires a grade of C or better

KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS

Total 15 credits

Requirement: Natural Sciences (GN) – 3 Credits

Requirement: Arts (GA) – 3 Credits

Requirement: Humanities (GH) – 3 Credits

Requirement: Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) – 3 Credits

~~[Delete] ~~[End Delete] [Add] Any additional [End Add] General Education course [Delete] selected from: GWS, GQ, GN, GA, GH, or GS and may include Integrative Studies (Inter-domain or Linked courses [End Delete] – 3 Credits~~~~

[Add] **NOTE: Up to six credits of Inter-domain courses may be used for any Knowledge Domain requirement, but when a course is used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits from the course can be counted only once.** *[End Add]*

FLEXIBILITY OF THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The General Education program extends the concept of flexibility to all aspects of the degree program. Penn State wants students to use General Education as an opportunity to experiment and explore, to take academic risks, to discover things they did not know before, and to learn to do things they have not done before.

To these ends, students may, with the permission of their adviser and dean's representative, substitute a 200- to 499-level course for an Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, or Social and Behavioral Sciences course found on the General Education list. For example, a student may take a 400-level course in history and use it to meet the General Education requirement satisfied by a comparable lower level history course.

Policy Update in Senate Policies for Undergraduates

Please note that the following contains bold text for additions and strikeouts indicating deleted text. Deleted text is notated with [Delete] [End Delete]. Added text is notated with [Add] [End Add].

Policies and Rules for Undergraduate Students

Appendix A.2 General Education (Associate Degree)

The University Faculty Senate, at its meeting in April 2015, adopted a comprehensive revision of General Education Learning Objectives and requirements. This revision was further detailed in the General Education

report adopted by the Senate in March 2016.

The General Education curriculum will enable students to acquire skills, knowledge, and experiences for living in interconnected contexts, so they can contribute to making life better for others, themselves, and the world. General Education encompasses the breadth of knowledge involving the major intellectual and aesthetic skills and achievements of humanity. This must include understanding and appreciation of the pluralistic nature of knowledge epitomized by the natural sciences, quantitative skills, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and arts. To achieve and share such an understanding and appreciation, skills in self-expression, quantitative analysis, information literacy, and collaborative interaction are necessary. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. General Education, in essence, aims to cultivate a knowledgeable, informed, literate human being.

An effective General Education curriculum shall facilitate teaching and learning through seven key objectives:

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION – The ability to exchange information and ideas in oral, written, and visual form in ways that allow for informed and persuasive discourse that builds trust and respect among those engaged in that exchange, and helps create environments where creative ideas and problem-solving flourish.

KEY LITERACIES – The ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate, and compute using materials in a variety of media and contexts. Literacy acquired in multiple areas, such as textual, quantitative, information/technology, health, intercultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic (world languages), and scientific, enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, to lead healthy and productive lives, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING – The habit of mind characterized by comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion. It is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

INTEGRATIVE THINKING – The ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains, modes of inquiry, historical periods, and perspectives, as well as the ability to identify linkages between existing knowledge and new information. Individuals who engage in integrative thinking are able to transfer knowledge within and beyond their current contexts.

CREATIVE THINKING – The capacity to synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of performing, making, thinking, or acting in an imaginative way that may be characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and intellectual risk taking.

GLOBAL LEARNING – The intellectually disciplined abilities to analyze similarities and differences among cultures; evaluate natural, physical, social, cultural, historical, and economic legacies and hierarchies; and engage as community members and leaders who will continue to deal with the intricacies of an ever-changing world.

Individuals should acquire the ability to analyze power; identify and critique interdependent global, regional, and local cultures and systems; and evaluate the implications for people's lives.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING – The ability to assess one's own values within the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, describe how different perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Individuals should acquire the self-knowledge and leadership skills needed to play a role in creating and maintaining healthy, civil, safe, and thriving communities.

Courses taken to meet General Education program requirements may not be taken under the Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory option.

The General Education program for Penn State associate degree students consists of 21 credits distributed among communication and quantification skills (6 credits), the Knowledge Domain areas (15 credits), including courses in the natural sciences (3 credits), arts (3 credits), humanities (3 credits), and social and behavioral sciences (3 credits), and an additional 3 credits in any General Education area *[Add]* **(including Health and Wellness (GHW) *[End Add]* ~~Integrative Studies~~. *[End Delete]* *[Add]* Up to six credits of Inter-domain courses may be used for any Knowledge Domain requirement, but when a course is used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits from the course can be counted only once.** *[End Add]*

Students whose academic majors are in the areas of natural sciences, arts, humanities, and social and behavioral sciences may not meet the General Education Knowledge Domains components by taking courses in the department or program identical to that of the academic major. All General Education courses are to help students explore and integrate information beyond the special focuses of their majors.

Courses to be Used for General Education

Skills (6 credits)

Writing/Speaking (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Writing/Speaking (GWS) attribute satisfy this requirement.

Quantification (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Quantification (GQ) attribute satisfy this requirement (3 credits are selected from mathematics, applied mathematics, statistics, computer science, or symbolic logic).

Knowledge Domains (15 credits)

Natural Sciences (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Natural Sciences (GN) attribute satisfy this requirement.

Arts (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Arts (GA) attribute satisfy this requirement.

Humanities (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Humanities (GH) attribute satisfy this requirement.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 credits)

Courses designated with the Gen Ed: Social & Beh Sci (GS) attribute satisfy this requirement.

In addition to the above Knowledge Domains course requirements, associate degree students must complete 3 credits in any General Education area. *[Add]* **Inter-domain courses (N) may be used for any Knowledge Domain requirement, but when a course is used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits from the course can be counted only once.** *[End Add]*

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To these ends, students may, with the permission of their adviser and dean's representative, substitute a 200- to 499-level course for an Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, or Social and Behavioral Sciences course found on the General Education list. For example, a student may take a 400-level course in history and use it to meet the General Education requirement satisfied by a comparable lower level history course.

~~*[Delete]* **NOTE:** When a course is used to satisfy more than one requirement, the credits in the course can be counted only once.~~ *[End Delete]*

General Education courses are identified in the **University Course Descriptions** and **General Education** sections of the Undergraduate Degree Programs Bulletin. They can also be found in the Schedule of Courses by the appropriate course designation.

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