

Faculty Senate Resolution #17-45

Approved by the Faculty Senate: April 18, 2017

Approved by the Chancellor: May 22, 2017

Revised East Carolina University General Education Program

Replace the current policy, "[Goals of the Liberal Arts Foundations Curriculum](#)," (approved by the Faculty Senate in February 2005 and by the chancellor in March 2005) with the "East Carolina University General Education Program" document presented below and **implement the policy presented below effective spring semester 2018.**

**East Carolina University General Education Program**

**Vision Statement:**

Empowering Pirates to capture their horizons!!

ECU's motto is *Servire - To Serve*. The university prepares graduates by engaging the broad range of human knowledge and developing the skills that promote self-discovery and informed, responsible citizenship.

The fundamental purpose served in requiring students to take general education courses is to have students develop an understanding of aspects of the human condition that are not the primary focus of their major field of study. The number of subjects that fit this description is larger than can be required of ECU's students. Hence the university only requires courses in the broadest and most basic areas of study along with courses in especially valuable competency areas (written communication, mathematics, health promotion and health-related physical activity and diversity). Most professional and interdisciplinary programs of study are grounded in the following broad, basic areas of study: the fine arts, the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences.

General education exposes students to the broad range of human knowledge, while enabling them to acquire key skills and to gain critical competencies that prepare them to understand societal problems and to seek solutions. On that foundation, students then build expertise in one or more academic areas, developing the capacities to establish themselves in the work world and to contribute to society as engaged and well-informed citizens.

Students explore and inquire in the humanities, arts, natural sciences, and social sciences, learn to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, develop quantitative literacy, become familiar with global concerns and the diversity of the human experience, and cultivate the broad knowledge and skills that inform the mature exploration of their own majors. This foundation and its integration with specialized learning in the students' majors enable them to live broadly informed, responsible, and meaningful lives; at the same time, this preparation is essential to good citizenship in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world.

Fully developing each student's communication, computational and critical thinking skills can only be accomplished by the student's program of study in their academic major. General education courses advance students beyond the competencies acquired in PK-12 education, but these courses are too few in number and too early in an undergraduate's career to fully prepare students in these skill areas. The full development of these skills is the responsibility of each student's major area of study.

## **General Education Competencies and Course Credit**

Competency area program learning outcomes identify what each course that earns General Education credit must achieve in order for it to fulfill a General Education competency requirement.

Only undergraduate 1000 or 2000 level courses that have no prerequisites and that have as a primary requirement that the students enrolled in the course achieve the program learning outcomes for one competency area in the General Education core can receive General Education credit for that competency. This applies to all ECU colleges that offer undergraduate 1000 and 2000 level courses.

### **General Education Competency Areas:**

#### **Humanities Competency**

Courses in the Humanities and in interdisciplinary areas linked to subjects in the humanities challenge students to critically examine their beliefs and the beliefs of others about what can broadly be called “human existence” or referred to as “what it is to exist as a human being.” Humanities courses address a range of issues that ancient texts show have captured people’s attention for over 3000 years. These problems include matters of value, and the courses that address them require students to critically assess diverse understandings of life’s aesthetic, ethical and moral dimensions. Humanities courses require students to learn one or more methods of critical analysis and to understand the value of knowledge both for its own sake and for its application. The knowledge gained by taking courses in the Humanities contributes to each student’s understanding of how to choose a life worth living.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Humanities Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Humanities requirements can:

1. Distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition.
2. Apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.
3. Apply discipline-specific knowledge in the humanities to contrast their understanding with that of others of the significance of specific artistic, literary, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.

#### **Fine Arts Competency**

Courses in the Fine Arts develop the knowledge and skills students required to create, critique and appreciate diverse forms of Fine Art. These courses develop an understanding of the Fine Arts considered for their own sake and for their social, political and other impacts. Learning to apply one or more methods of critical analysis is essential to the critique of the different aspects of the fine arts. Creating, critiquing and appreciating works of visual and performing art and engaging in the scholarly study of the history and appreciation of the Fine Arts enhances the quality of each student’s life experience and contributes to the well-being of humanity.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Fine Arts Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Fine Arts requirements can:

1. Apply knowledge of an area in the Fine Arts to describe specific artists, works, movements and creative processes and their significance to the human condition.

2. Analyze diverse genres, styles, and techniques in their appropriate cultural and historical context.
3. Apply discipline-specific knowledge in the Fine Arts to evaluate the relevance of the Fine Arts to cultural and personal growth.

### **Natural Sciences Competency**

Courses in the Natural Sciences engage students with subjects that aim to answer fundamental questions about the structure and function of the complex systems that constitute the physical universe. Students learn to seek knowledge for its own sake as well as for its application, and to understand the relation of technological progress to advances made in the Natural Sciences. Courses in the Natural Sciences further students understanding of the scientific method. This prepares them for further study in technology or basic science. Students learn the connection between successful interdisciplinary scholarship and the knowledge provided by the Natural Sciences. Courses in the Natural Sciences initiate the development of the knowledge and skills students need to become broadly informed, to participate in interdisciplinary scholarship, and to be successful in their professional specialization.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Natural Science Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Natural Sciences requirements can:

1. Apply discipline-specific knowledge to explain natural phenomena and scientific problems.
2. Use discipline-specific methods to test a hypothesis by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and communicate the results.
3. Describe the scope and limits of science and how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world.
4. Describe how scientific data and advances in science relate to societal issues.

### **Social Sciences Competency**

Courses in the Social Sciences introduce students to the study of the psychological, social and cultural dimensions of individuals and groups. Students learn to seek knowledge for its own sake as well as for its application. Courses provide students with the knowledge necessary to solve problems in the Social Sciences and in scholarly fields that apply the methods used in the Social Sciences. They introduce students to the theoretical, analytical, and methodological techniques and perspectives of Social Sciences that advance the understanding of individual and group behavior. Scholarly study in the Social Sciences provides students with the foundation for understanding real-world problems necessary for meaningful participation in society. Courses in the Social Sciences develop the intellectual abilities, knowledge and skills that students need to become broadly informed, to participate in interdisciplinary scholarship, and to be successful in their professional specialization.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Social Science Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Social Sciences requirements can:

1. Apply discipline specific knowledge in the social sciences to explain the key factors that shape social institutions, structures, and processes that shape human behavior and social interaction.
2. Explain how cultural and historical contexts influence individual behavior, society or culture.
3. Apply discipline specific theories and modes of inquiry in the social sciences to analyze social contemporary behavioral or cultural issues.

## **Health Promotion and Health-Related Physical Activity Competency**

Courses in the health promotion and physical activity disciplines enable students to develop the knowledge and skills required for a physically fit and healthy functioning human body. Scholarly study in the health promotion and physical activity disciplines promotes the understanding and intellectual abilities essential to making informed decisions about how to be healthy and physically fit. Proficiency in engaging in life-enhancing group and individual physical activity is essential to living a healthy, high-quality life. Scholarship in these areas address behaviors and develop skills that have a positive impact on overall human wellbeing.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Health Promotion and Health-Related Physical Activity Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Health Promotion and Health-Related Physical Activity requirements can:

1. Explain the factors that influence human health and wellness, and affect major public health issues in society;
2. Identify barriers to and evaluate strategies for achieving optimal health among all populations, including those experiencing health disparities;
3. Apply concepts, skills, tools and methods in health promotion to assess and improve personal health.

## **Written Communication Competency**

Courses in the writing competency curriculum focuses on student aptitudes rather than on a particular content because composing is a recursive process that depends not on specific knowledge but on fluent, flexible, creative thinking. To concentrate on the essentials of composing, the program explicitly treats stages of process such as discovery, drafting, etc. It concentrates on exposition and argument as the modes most useful for the student and the citizen. It teaches students how to use library resources so that students may expand their access to knowledge essential for informed discourse. The program emphasizes critical thinking as well as traditional rhetorical skills because only insight can generate substance for the writer's craft to shape.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Written Communication Competency.*

Students who have completed the Written Communication General Education requirements can:

1. Create, identify, and engage in significant research questions.
2. Engage rhetorically and integrate a variety of appropriate sources to support a central claim.
3. Select and use appropriate methods and rhetorical strategies that suit the purpose and audience of a specific context and discipline.
4. Organize sentences and paragraphs to communicate central points with logical connections and a minimum of grammar and punctuation errors.
5. Format documents and cite sources in accordance with the conventions in the individual disciplines.
6. Demonstrate methods of inquiry and rhetorical strategies, including form, media and style relevant to the discipline.
7. Identify and explain writing strategies used in their writing.

## **Mathematics Competency**

Courses in the mathematics competency curriculum provides students with basic skills in mathematics or logic.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Mathematics Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Mathematics requirements can:

1. Correctly use/interpret mathematical notation and terminology to solve problems
2. Apply general concepts and principles of mathematics to solve various kinds of problems (e.g. use general formulas, recognize general patterns in a collection of problems, apply rules of logic in the process of problem solving).
3. Model/solve problems related to applications that describe various phenomena in nature and society.

## **Global and Domestic Diversity Competencies**

Courses that address diversity provide opportunities for students to learn about the beliefs, values and achievements of people other than those of their own age, race/ethnicity, social and economic status, culture, national origin, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. These courses also provide opportunities to examine problems that may arise from differences, and opportunities to learn how to deal constructively with these issues.

*The following program learning outcomes define the Global and Domestic Diversity Competency.*

Students who have completed the General Education Global and Domestic Diversity requirements can:

Domestic Diversity:

1. Describe problems that arise in the USA from differences in age, race/ethnicity, social and economic status, culture, national origin, ability, religion, sexual orientation and gender identify in the context of their historical and contemporary causes and effects, including attempts to resolve these problems;
2. Apply discipline specific methods to evaluate from different perspectives domestic problems arising from differences in age, race/ethnicity, culture, social and economic status, national origin, ability, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Global Diversity:

1. Describe how cultural beliefs and values shape people's perceptions and impact global decisions and actions;
2. Evaluate global issues and events from multiple perspectives.

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This replaces the 2005 Goals of the Liberal Arts Foundations Curriculum at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/as/liberalartsfoundation.pdf>.