

General Education Program Implementation
Date: Fall 2019
(revised Spring 2024 for DIV changes)

Overview

The General Education curriculum includes critical components recommended by the General Education Advisory Board informed by feedback we have received from the University Community over the past few years, including:

- A first year course, with a significant content shared across all programs
- A universal use of Electronic Portfolios to facilitate students' thinking across their Gen Ed and Major courses
- A universal implementation of capstone courses in the majors, with a requirement that students synthesize their entire undergraduate career (Gen Ed, major, minor, and co-curricular work)
- Development and implementation of pathways utilizing existing Gen Ed requirements which can lead to transcriptable certificates

Mission Statement

A liberal arts education prepares students to think and communicate as professionals to understand the social and global contexts of their lives to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another, to recognize difference and make informed decisions using reasoning skills, and to balance the various dimensions of their personal and professional lives. With these important goals in mind, West Chester University's General Education Program strives to provide students with the experiences necessary to achieve the following goals:

1. Communicate effectively
2. Think critically and analytically
3. Employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods
4. Demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries
5. Examine the workings of power, oppression, and resistance in a diverse society
6. Understand varied historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions
7. Make informed decisions and ethical choices

Academic Foundations	
First Year Experience	4
English Composition (WRT 120/123 and 200-level WRT course)	6-7
Mathematics (MAT)	3-4
Interdisciplinary (INT)	3
Diverse Communities (DIV)	3
Ethics (ETH)	3
Distributed Disciplinary Requirements	
Science (SCI)	6-8
Behavioral And Social Science (BSS)	6
Humanities (HUM)	6
Arts (ART)	3
Total Credits	43-47

Additional Baccalaureate Requirements

University Requirements	
Writing Emphasis Requirements for all Baccalaureate Degrees (WRT)	9
Speaking Emphasis Requirement for all Baccalaureate Degrees (SPE)	9
Degree Requirements	3
Language and Culture Requirements for B.A., B.M and some B.S. Degrees	0-15
Capstone (CAP)	1-15
<i>Minimum number of total earned credits for all Baccalaureate Degrees</i>	<i>120</i>

Alignment of Courses with Goals

Participating courses use assessment artifacts to demonstrate the common Student Learning Outcomes for each, as detailed below.

Academic Foundations	Goals
First Year Experience*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
English Composition (WRT 120/123 + WRT 2XX)	1, 2
Mathematics	1, 2, 3
Interdisciplinary	1, 2, 4
Diverse Communities	1, 2, 5
Ethics	1, 2, 7

Distributed Disciplinary Requirements*	Goals
Sciences	1, 2, 3
Humanities	1, 2, 6
Arts	1, 2, 6
Behavioral and Social Science	1, 2; 3 and/or 6

*When 6 credits of distributives are necessary to meet a general education requirement, students must enroll in separate disciplines for each of the 3 credits (e.g., Sciences: a student cannot take 6 credits in biology).

Additional Baccalaureate Requirements	
University Requirements	
Writing Emphasis	1, 2
Speaking Emphasis	1, 2
Degree Requirements	
Capstone*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

*The First Year Experience will introduce all General Education goals as a foundational approach to the degree program. The Capstone Course (Practicum, Seminar, Field Experience, Internship, etc.) will include an assignment requiring students to reflect on the integration of the General Education Program with their Major Program, thereby referencing all Gen Ed goals. (The assignment may be ungraded.)

Student Learning Outcomes

Communication and Critical thinking are essential to the general education of every student. Thus, all General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Requirement courses will provide learning experiences designed to achieve **at least one** Student Learning Outcome from the list below for the goals of communication (#1) and critical thinking (#2). The courses must also meet the minimum number of outcomes associated with each other goal met by the course, as detailed below. Each outcome must be explicitly aligned with an assessment (one assignment can assess more than one outcome). Additional General Education student learning outcomes may be developed.

ALL courses must meet:	GE Goal	Student Learning Outcome(s) Each course must include experiences designed to allow students to demonstrate (via artifacts collected for program assessment) the following:
ALL GE Courses	1	<i>Address at least one of the following:</i> a) Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms b) Revise and improve written and/or presentations c) Express oneself effectively in presentations d) Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading
ALL GE Courses	2	<i>Address at least one of the following:</i> a) Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea b) Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments c) Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence d) Develop creative or innovative approaches to assignments or projects

ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS courses must meet:	GE Goal	Student Learning Outcome(s) Each course must include experiences designed to allow students to demonstrate (via artifacts collected for program assessment) the following:
WRT 120/123 WRT 2XX	1,2	<p><i>Address all three of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) THINK WITH WRITING: Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover ideas, engage deeply with questions, reconsider concepts and beliefs, explore problems, and promote local and global change, including but not limited to engaging those questions, problems and concepts currently of relevance to the academy b) THINK ABOUT WRITING: Develop metacognitive awareness about writing and rhetoric c) COMPOSE WRITING: Demonstrate genre awareness and rhetorical agility through both producing and problematizing academic and public, dominant and non-dominant, genres, in both written and multimodal forms
Mathematics	3	<p><i>Address both of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Correctly use numbers, symbols, measurements, properties, and the relationships of quantities to make decisions, judgments, and/or predictions b) Demonstrate quantitative literacy and the ability to use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data
Interdisciplinary	4	<p><i>Address both of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Synthesize and/or integrate information, and/or approaches from multiple disciplines in the investigation of a concept, culture, or idea, or problem b) Demonstrate the ability to appreciate how a given topic is informed and/or influenced by multiple disciplines simultaneously
Diverse Communities	5	<p><i>Address all of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Analyze the role that social structures have historically played or continue to play in maintaining disparities within and/or across diverse groups b) Discuss the varied ways peoples from marginalized groups resist oppression and wield agency despite structural exclusion and discrimination c) Identify relevant tools or strategies to challenge oppression and help create a more just and equitable world
Ethics	7	<p><i>Address at least two of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts: can identify and explain ethically relevant theories, concepts or perspectives b) Ethical Issue Recognition: can identify core ethical issues in scenarios or dilemmas c) Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts: can apply relevant ethical theories and/or concepts to fictional or real-world scenarios d) Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts: can offer intellectually honest critiques and evaluations of ethical positions, including one's own

DISTRIBUTIVE DISCIPLINARY courses must meet (number of credits for the distributive are indicated in parenthesis):	GE Goal	Student Learning Outcome(s) Each course must include experiences designed to allow students to demonstrate (via artifacts collected for program assessment) the following:
Sciences (6) Science courses develop a student's ability to gather and analyze data; observe; and employ quantitative methods, as well as basic thought processes, to the examination of the natural or physical world.	3	<i>Address both of the following:</i> a) Employ quantitative methods to examine a problem in the natural or physical world. b) Apply the basic methods and thought processes of the scientific method for natural/physical science in a particular discipline.
Humanities (6) Humanities courses develop a student's ability to analyze, define, and explore what it means to be human; including how language, thought, and creative expression speak to an individual's values, beliefs, and traditions.	6	<i>Address both of the following:</i> a) Analyze, define, and explore what it means to be human (including how language, thought, and creative expression speak to an individual's values, beliefs, and traditions) b) Demonstrate an understanding of varied historical, cultural, and/or philosophical traditions
Behavioral and Social Science (6) Behavioral and Social Science courses develop a student's ability to employ qualitative and/or quantitative methods in examining the patterns and processes of human activities. They also help develop students' ability to understand the cultural and social context of human behavior and decision-making.	3 and/or 6	Goal 3: <i>Address both of the following:</i> a) Employ qualitative and/or quantitative methods to examine the patterns and processes of human activities. b) Apply the basic methods and thought processes of the scientific method to understand human activity. Goal 6: <i>Address both of the following:</i> c) Demonstrate the ability to understand human activity in cultural and/or social context. d) Demonstrate an understanding of varied historical, cultural, and/or philosophical traditions.
Arts (3) Arts courses develop a student's ability to think critically and analytically about form, function, and the creative process.	6	<i>Address at least two of the following</i> a) Demonstrate the ability to analyze, critique, and interpret works of art and culture. b) Identify connections among diverse human artistic and cultural productions across time and/or space.

		c) Articulate the importance of artistic and cultural production to what it means to be human.
ADDITIONAL BACCALAUREATE courses must meet:	GE Goal	Student Learning Outcome(s) Each course must include experiences designed to allow students to demonstrate (via artifacts collected for program assessment) the following:
Writing Emphasis	1, 2	<p><i>Goal 1: Address at least one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms b) Revise and improve written and/or presentations c) Express oneself effectively in presentations d) Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading <p><i>Goal 2: Address at least one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea b) Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments c) Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence d) Develop creative or innovative approaches to assignments or projects
Speaking Emphasis	1, 2	<p><i>Goal 1: Address at least two of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms b) Revise and improve written and/or presentations c) Express oneself effectively in presentations d) Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading <p><i>Goal 2: Address at least one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea b) Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments c) Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence

First Year Experience

The First Year Experience (FYE) will be a required course intended to provide students with a basic platform from which they can plan their continuing growth and development while at WCU. FYE courses can be developed by individual programs, departments, colleges or as a university-wide option. FYE courses will contain common content across all sections. The remaining of content will be developed by individual programs, departments, etc.

The shared content, to be developed by university faculty, may include:

- an overview of the liberal arts tradition
- an explanation of the structure of the General Education curriculum
- introduction of the e-portfolio and its use across the undergraduate degree
- research about brain development, psych of learning, and metacognitive, affective, and social dynamics; information intended to help students understand the learning process and the factors important to a successful college experience
- strengths-based learning and strengths-based alignment of professional goals
- discussion of the importance of non-cognitive factors that impact student success
- an opportunity for experiential learning (research and/or service)
- information pertaining to university policies and campus life

Electronic Portfolio

We will encourage the use of an electronic portfolio in all General Education courses. The First Year Experience will introduce the e-portfolio as a way for students to collect their work; to work on developing their personal and professional identities online; to review their work for synthesis; and, in the capstone course, to generate an integrated overview of their career, including both Major and General Education courses. The capstone assignment does not have to be a graded component of the course, but may be; it must be a requirement of the course. All Academic Foundations, Distributive, Interdisciplinary, Diverse Communities, and Writing Emphasis courses should try to incorporate the electronic portfolio in a way that encourages integration of student learning across courses. By Year 5 of the new General Education program, we would like to have 100% participation across all General Education courses.

Pathway Certificate Programs: In an effort to encourage more cross-disciplinary thinking, to provide students more opportunities for applying information and learning approaches across multiple disciplines, and to provide a cohesive approach to more easily integrate the General Education program within the goals of a degree program, faculty can work collaboratively to create 12-credit certificate programs for General Education pathways designed to address specific themes. These certificates will appear on student transcripts.

Faculty are encouraged to develop pathway certificate program representing linkages across multiple areas of the General Education curriculum. While the range of potential pathway themes is certainly open for discussion and approval, initial themes recommended by the Gen Ed Advisory Committee include:

- Sustainability and Society
- Diversity, Power, and Justice
- Global and Cross-Cultural Understanding
- Community Engagement
- Digital Literacy