

Effective: June 2008

**Academic Program: Undergraduate Studies
GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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Deans' Council, Faculty Senate

General Education Curriculum

Definition

General education is a program of study which introduces students to a broad, liberal course of instruction in the major areas of knowledge (the arts and sciences). Its aim is to cultivate the intellect by educating students to reason logically, to think critically, to express themselves clearly, and to foster an understanding of the human condition and the role of value judgments in the human experience. As an integrated educational experience, the general education program helps to provide the foundation for further intellectual growth and holistic development. In addition to giving a sense of the various academic disciplines, and their interrelationships, general education serves as the common element for all degree programs leading to the baccalaureate.

Purpose

Consistent with Millersville University's mission to provide a liberal arts-based education, the purpose of general education is to provide breadth of knowledge as a balance and complement to the depth provided by the major. This is necessary for the holistic development of Millersville graduates as responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community.

Interpreted

General education is an integral component of the undergraduate experience, generally constituting one-third to one-half of the course work of the baccalaureate program. It is not intended to address all dimensions of the college experience. General education is the liberal arts foundation for learning at the undergraduate level. To fulfill its function(s) the program must be concise, orderly and rational in its requirements. Its various parts must be interrelated and they must demonstrate that interrelatedness through its structure. General education must be practical in its demands to assure that students can complete other facets of the university experience in a reasonable time period. And, most importantly, general education must be "useful," imparting to the student the skills necessary to do work at the university level. General

education must, in a larger sense, assure that students are prepared to address and solve problems beyond the university environment.

Traditionally, programs in general education are centered in the Liberal Arts (Humanities, Fine Arts, Natural and Social Sciences). This core is to guarantee that students have a base of knowledge from which to address a multiplicity of concerns beyond specific disciplines. The body of knowledge is general only in the sense that it draws from interrelated fields with a shared heritage. Certain areas of inquiry and branches of knowledge are more appropriate to the specific, limited aims of the program than others. Nevertheless, departments not traditionally considered in the mainstream of liberal arts may submit courses for consideration in general education. These courses must comply with the established criteria.

Characteristics of the General Education Program

The program is intended to exhibit an identifiable organization and coherence of course orientation and development. The interrelatedness of the areas of knowledge should be discernible to the students throughout the program, with the academic disciplines represented as interpretations of and contributions to knowledge rather than as self serving entities. Indeed, the program accommodates the design and implementation of course offerings outside the traditional departmental units of the disciplines constituting the arts and sciences.

The liberal arts component of a "general education" program is designed to prepare students to live, not simply to make a living. While a narrowly focused or highly technical program may provide for success in the market place and make competent technicians, the general education program provides broad competence which helps produce complete, mature, responsible leaders and citizens of the world; that is, the program is "practical" in that it helps students prepare for the wide variety of problems with which they must contend in a complex world. Its value resists obsolescence.

The program is meant to reflect the reality of a culturally pluralistic and interdependent world. The common survival of humanity in a world of finite resources demands an unprecedented level of understanding and positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities. Our students must be made aware of the global perspectives which can enhance this understanding.

In a society compelled to emphasize technical specialization, the need for courses in the liberal arts becomes ever more important to assure the development of an educated person who can communicate, reason, and solve problems intelligently.

The General Education Program is intended to be characterized by:

1. Clear Purpose that is well understood by all members of the university community and that is consistent with the MU mission and the specific learning needs of MU students.
2. Intentional Alignment of the objectives, curricular structure, and assessment with the purpose of general education, the mission of Millersville University, and the learning needs of our students.

3. Coherence and connections between Gen Ed and majors.
4. Intellectual Richness, setting appropriately high expectations for students' engagement that develop as students progress through their academic programs.
5. Academic Community Reaching beyond the Classroom, fostering interactions between and among students, faculty, and the larger Millersville University community.
6. Simplicity and flexibility, promoting ease of understanding and greater choice in meeting the Gen Ed requirements.

Furthermore, certain basic principles shape the curriculum of the general education Program. The program is designed to ensure:

1. that the students possess the fundamental competencies:
 - a. Critical reasoning
 - b. Oral and written communication
 - c. Mathematical reasoning
 - d. Scientific reasoning
 - e. Information literacy
 - f. Technology literacy;
2. that there be a significant exposure to the liberal arts;
3. that the liberal arts core be protected from erosion on either side, such as the granting of credit in the liberal arts core for pre-college level work or for work in the student's field of specialization;
4. that the number of 100 level courses students may take for general education be limited; and
5. that some specified courses at the 200 level or above which count for general education credit contain a significant writing component. Writing is central to the academic process; therefore, the general education curriculum should provide opportunity for students to develop the skill of writing throughout their academic careers, both horizontally (across the curriculum) and vertically (at all levels of study).

Objectives of General Education

Students, working with advisors, and taking into consideration prior knowledge and experience, purposefully select courses in the general education curriculum that meld with required courses, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and courses in the major to achieve the following objectives:

FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

1. Students will think, speak, and write clearly. This is evidenced by:
 - a. the clear presentation of ideas in formal spoken, written, and media forms.
 - b. the use of effective communication for ongoing dialogue.
 - c. the ability to find appropriate sources of information, evaluate that information, and integrate that information into a final product.
 - d. the use of statistical methods and other techniques of mathematics to analyze and solve problems.

CRITICAL THINKING ACROSS THE LIBERAL ARTS

2. Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the important ideas and methods of different ways of knowing as follows:
 - a. in the humanities students will analyze and interpret existing works of literature and the arts.
 - b. in the sciences students will engage in the scientific method, laboratory study, appropriate technology, and mathematics to investigate, evaluate, and apply scientific concepts and theories.
 - c. in social sciences students will develop the necessary tools of critical thinking, inquiry, and diplomacy to participate effectively in our democracy and the increasingly complex global society.

CONNECTIONS AND EXPLORATION

3. Students will connect important ideas and methods of inquiry from different disciplines as a means of becoming holistic and responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community. Students will:
 - a. demonstrate civic and social responsibility.
 - b. grow in their engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities, both inside and outside the United States.
 - c. build the foundation for a lifelong process of understanding, developing, and monitoring healthy lifestyle behaviors in all dimensions of wellness, including physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and environmental wellness.
 - d. gain personal enrichment by developing new interests that can be enjoyed throughout a lifetime.

Criteria for General Education Courses

The criteria for evaluating courses to be counted in the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts component of general education are:

1. The course must demonstrate how one or more of the general education objectives stated above are satisfied.
2. In each course the major concepts and principles that epitomize the liberal arts discipline must be the primary focus.

3. The process of inquiry and analysis commonly employed in the discipline must be emphasized and applied.
4. The course must not be primarily a technical, professional or career-oriented course.
5. A general education course from a given department may require a maximum of two prerequisites from that same department.

General Education Course Review Procedure

1. Any new or existing course seeking to meet a specific general education requirement shall follow the general course approval procedures that appear in Section 3, Course and Program Modification Policies.
2. Until fall of 2009, existing course seeking to meet Cultural Diversity and Community (D) courses or Writing (W) courses will follow the expedited review procedures that appear in Section 3 Course and Program Modification Policies.
3. Proposers shall complete the appropriate General Education Application form (available from the Faculty Senate website) that addresses all criteria for each course.
4. Once approved, Perspectives (P) courses, Cultural Diversity and Community (D) courses, Writing (W) courses, and First Year Inquiry (FYI) seminars are subject to a five-year recertification process as specified in Section 3, Course and Program Modification Policies.

Structure of the Program

To meet the objectives of General Education, the general education program is organized into a structure with three components: Foundations for Lifelong Learning, Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts, and Connections and Exploration.

General Education Structure (Minimum 51 credits)

1. *Foundations for Lifelong Learning* (Four courses – minimum 12 credits)¹
 - a. ENGL 110: English Composition - 3 credits
 - b. COMM 100: Fundamentals of Speech - 3 credits
 - c. General Education MATH Course (3-4 credits)
 - d. Advanced Writing (3 credits)
 - i. Must be chosen from ENGL 311, 312, 313, or 316
 - ii. At least 60 credits (Junior standing) required

¹ “*Foundations for Lifelong Learning*” requirements may not double-count for “*Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts*” or “*Connections and Exploration*” requirements below.

2. *Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts* (Nine courses – minimum 27 credits)

- a. Humanities and Fine Arts (G1): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits.
- b. Science and Mathematics (G2): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits. At least two of the three courses must come from Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and/or Physics including one which has a Laboratory (L) component.
- c. Social Sciences (G3): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits.
- d. Exactly 2 courses must be taken from one department within G1, G2, and G3².
- e. At least 3 courses taken throughout blocks G1, G2 and G3 must be at the 200 level or above.
- f. Courses in a student's primary major discipline cannot fulfill the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts requirement; courses from a minor, a second major, or up to six courses required for the major from departments outside the major can fulfill this requirement.

3. *Connections and Exploration* (12 credits)

- a. First Year Inquiry seminar - 0 or 3 credits
- b. Approved Wellness course - 3 credits
- c. Perspectives (P) course - 3 credits
 - i. At least 60 credits (Junior standing) required
 - ii. The English Composition and Fundamentals of Speech competency must be satisfied prior to enrollment in "P" courses.
- d. Open Elective(s) [100 level or above courses; must be taken outside of primary major³] - 3 to 6 credits
- e. Cultural Diversity and Community (D) course - 1 course required
 - i. May be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.
- f. Writing (W) - 4 courses required
 - i. May be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.
 - ii. The English 110 competency must be satisfied prior to enrollment in "W" courses.

² For the purpose of course counting, courses with divisional designations are considered as a separate department but may not be used to fulfill the "two course in one department" rule. Additionally, Anthropology and Sociology are considered separate departments for this rule. A math course in G2 may count along with a math course from "Foundations for Lifelong Learning" to satisfy the "two courses in one department" rule for G2.

³ "Outside of the primary major" means that courses offered by the major department that could count toward the fulfillment of that major cannot be taken for Open Elective credit. Courses offered by the major department that lie outside the requirements for the student's major (e.g., that count toward another major offered by that department) can be taken as Open Electives. BSE students may not count required professional education courses. Open electives do not have to be approved G1, G2, or G3 courses.

Guidelines for General Education Courses

Composition Sequence

All students must successfully complete English 110, or its equivalent (see listing below), preferably during their freshman year. The equivalent includes:

1. Achieving a combined score of 1100 in the verbal portion of the S.A.T. and the CEEB English Composition Achievement Test.
2. Achieving a score of 3 or higher in the Advanced Placement (AP) test in English Composition.
3. Achieving a satisfactory score in the CLEP general examination in English composition.
4. Passing the English Composition Competency Examination administered by the English Department at the beginning of each fall and spring semester.

Students who successfully complete one of the above, demonstrating that they are ready for advanced composition, will take one of the courses described below during their junior or senior years. Individual departments with programs which offer a significant advanced writing course, such as senior thesis or advanced foreign language composition, may petition through the appropriate academic channels to have such a course accepted as an alternate to the upper division writing course in English.⁴

Advanced Composition Courses

English 311: Advanced Composition

English 312: Technical Writing

English 313: Journalism

English 316: Business Writing

Significant Writing Component Guidelines "W"

Rationale: The writing component of general education is designed to ensure that undergraduate students have the opportunity to develop competence and confidence in their writing skills.

Description: The following guidelines apply to all Writing Intensive ("W") courses beginning in fall 2008:

1. Students practice forms of writing typical of the field. Writing assignments are designed to develop their content knowledge and enhance their communication skills.

⁴ Currently, the following alternatives have been approved: History 406 (Senior Seminar) passed with a grade of B or above and Honors Theses in the following Departments (check with Departments for specific rules that may apply): Biology, Elementary Education, Mathematics, and Music. Honors Theses for students in the Honors College also satisfy the Advanced Writing requirement.

2. Students are required to submit at least 2500 words of graded analytical/persuasive writing (about 10 standard double-spaced pages). Some examples of how this requirement might be met include:
 - a. a research paper in which the student is required to define a problem, select, organize, and synthesize information around a stated thesis.
 - b. short analytical essays that explore a topic with reasoned evidence and informed opinion.
 - c. position papers prepared by students that address pros and cons of controversial topics.
 - d. microthemes that ask the student to find academic sources, organize ideas, develop a thesis and show evidence, but condense the final paper to a single page or two.
3. Because W courses assume that writing is a process, students will be given opportunities to develop and revise papers through more than one draft. Assignments will be structured and sequenced in ways that help students improve their writing through practice and revision. Instructors' feedback on students' writing will contribute to effective revision and encourage students to develop effective self-assessment.
4. Writing intensive courses work best when they include a combination of informal and formal writing experiences for students. In addition to the 2500 words of revised graded analytical/persuasive writing, instructors are encouraged to assign expressive, reflective and/or observational writing tasks. The purpose of these assignments is to bring out the student's perceptions informally, and to increase writing practice.

The above guidelines are designed to lead students to more fully appreciate the writing process, a process which includes writing, rewriting, editing, and revision. Courses with a 'W' designation must continue to demonstrate the importance of writing in both individual learning and group communication.

Perspectives

Perspectives is an advanced studies requirement of the Connections and Exploration component of general education. A major function of these courses is to apply analytical and critical thinking abilities in resolving major social, cultural, scientific/technological, and/or aesthetic problems. They are interdisciplinary and/or multi-cultural in content and require a high level of educational maturity, knowledge, and thinking. Perspectives courses encourage undergraduate students to make independent and responsible value judgments and decisions.

Perspectives courses integrate the knowledge acquired throughout the baccalaureate experience. For example, Perspectives courses nurture and extend the basic communications skills developed in the Foundations for Life-Long Learning component of general education. Moreover, Perspectives courses demonstrate how different areas of knowledge gained in the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts component of general education are complementary.

Each student must:

1. Satisfactorily complete one 3 credit Perspectives course from a list of approved courses. Students who complete an academic fall or spring semester abroad as part of a baccalaureate degree will be considered to have fulfilled the Perspectives requirement. International students studying at Millersville will also be considered to have fulfilled the Perspectives requirement. This waiver does not cover credit hours. A student employing this waiver will be required to satisfy three credit hours of general education courses in lieu of the waived three credit Perspectives course. This is in addition to any other Open Elective requirements of the student.
2. Prior to enrolling in the Perspectives course, each student must:
 - a. Have satisfied the English Composition and Fundamentals of Speech requirements.
 - b. Have completed at least 60 credits (Junior standing).

Perspectives Course Criteria:

1. Must be 3 credit hours at the 300 level or above.
2. Must have meaningful oral and written communication⁵ components but may not carry a "W" label.
3. Must be interdisciplinary and/or multicultural in content.
4. Requires the students to identify, critically analyze, and resolve complex problems (social, cultural, scientific/technological, and/or aesthetic) that require the application of knowledge from two or more academic disciplines and/or cultures.
5. May not have a narrow technical, professional, or career orientation.
6. Must enable quality interaction.
7. No Perspectives course may have more than two prerequisites from a single department.
8. No Perspectives course may be counted within the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts component of general education.

⁵ To have a meaningful oral component, the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the course should involve students in active speaking and listening roles, including such tasks as student oral presentations (individually or in groups), oral exams, debates, and classroom discussions. Students should be in roles that place them in interaction with an audience of their peers so that communication is interactive and reciprocal. The assessment of student learning through these roles should contribute to students' overall course grades.

To have a meaningful writing component, the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the course should involve students in writing activities, such as research papers, analytical essays, position papers, lab reports, personal journals, and the like. The assessment of student learning through these activities should constitute a substantial portion ($\geq 20\%$) of students' overall course grades.

9. No Perspectives course may be required of a student by his/her major and also fulfill that student's general education Perspectives requirement.
10. Perspectives courses must be designed to be accessible to non-majors as well as majors. Appropriately prepared students from outside the major must be capable of benefiting from the course on an equal basis with students from within the major.

Cultural Diversity and Community

Cultural Diversity and Community is a requirement of the Connections and Exploration component of general education. This requirement aligns general education with the University's mission to foster in students an appreciation for cultural diversity. Here, "cultural diversity" refers to the differences among people in terms of beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences. In essence, culture is a worldview; it is both learned and evolved. The following factors are seen as underlying these differences: age, economics, education, gender, geography, language, nationality, occupation, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, and/or sexual orientation among others. A Cultural Diversity and Community course is more than a mere survey or exposure of the students to different cultures; rather it teaches students to think critically about the basis for intercultural differences.

Each student must:

1. Satisfactorily complete one 3 credit Cultural Diversity and Community course from a list of approved courses.

Cultural Diversity and Community Course Criteria:

1. Involves 3 credit hours at the 100-level or above.
2. Is intercultural and/or cross-cultural, with culture being a worldview that reflects beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences as shaped by age, economics, education, gender, geography, language, nationality, occupation, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, and/or sexual orientation among other factors.
3. Examines historical and environmental (e.g., social and/or physical) factors that underlie cultural differences.
4. Examines the potential global, regional, or local factors that underlie cultural differences.
5. Helps students to identify, critically analyze, and apply scholarship and experience related to cultural diversity.
6. Provides academic structure in support of students' positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities.
7. Challenges students to evaluate their own personal worldview.

8. Has meaningful oral and written communication⁶ components.
9. May also count as part of any additional requirement (major, minor, or Gen Ed) of the Baccalaureate degree.

Wellness Courses

The Wellness requirement is designed to assist students in making positive lifestyle changes that reduce their health risks, modify their consumer behavior, and enhance their personal well-being and productivity.

Criteria for the General Education Wellness requirement are as follows:

1. must be a 3 credit course.
2. requires students to participate in a weekly physical or experiential component.
3. must be a comprehensive approach to wellness employing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and social learning strategies to encourage and assist students in accepting responsibility for their own wellness.
4. engages students in critical thinking about wellness.
5. emphasizes the development of life-long holistic learning.

First Year Inquiry Seminar (UNIV 103)

Incoming students are encouraged to take a First Year Inquiry (FYI) seminar which will count as part of a Connections and Exploration Component. The FYI seminar is a component of General Education specifically designed for first semester freshmen and offered in a seminar format, typically linked to a foundations course (either ENGL 110 or COMM 100) as part of a living/learning community. Students will choose from a number of FYI topics offered each semester. A major function of these FYI seminars is to introduce a process of critical inquiry applied to important social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems. Each FYI seminar will introduce multiple perspectives related to the understanding and resolution of these problems. A second

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function of these FYI seminars is to support students' transition into the college experience academically, socially, and personally. Each FYI course topic will be approved according to guidelines specified in University Governance and Policies and will meet the general requirements specified in the generic UNIV 103 Course Proposal.

First Year Inquiry Seminar Criteria:

1. Involves 3 credit hours at the 100-level.
2. Encourages students to consider multiple perspectives in advancing their understanding of the importance of social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems.
3. Introduces and supports (i) the development of critical inquiry skills and (ii) the exchange of ideas in a seminar format.
4. Supports the students' successful transition into college life by fostering connections between and among students, teachers, and the college community.
5. Provides intellectual richness through its assignments and assessments.
6. Strengthens students' information literacy.
7. Has meaningful oral and written communication⁷ components, but may not carry a "W" label.
8. Fosters an appreciation of the importance of civic engagement and promotes participation in service learning activities.
9. Promotes an understanding and appreciation of the liberal arts tradition and the General Education program at Millersville.

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