

## **General Education Committee**

### **Charge**

The General Education Committee considers new courses for inclusion as general education , and performs periodic reviews of these courses to ensure they continue to satisfy required core competencies and are suitable for transfer.

### **Evaluating Courses for Inclusion/Continued Inclusion as General Education Courses**

Courses that may qualify for inclusion as general education courses include:

- new courses proposed for inclusion in the college curriculum;
- courses that are already a part of the college curriculum but are not currently identified as general education courses; and
- courses that have already been identified as general education courses and are in need of periodic reaffirmation.

To be included as a general education course, a course must meet the following criteria:

1. Clearly meet the learning outcomes of one or more of the general education competencies.
2. Include an authentic assignment or selection of authentic assignments that all faculty will require of their students that allow for the development and assessment of student learning in one or more of the selected general education competencies.
3. Provide students with an introduction to an academic discipline or a primary subdivision of that discipline.
4. Be open to all students satisfying the appropriate prerequisites and serve significant numbers of students from different academic programs.
5. Have support from full-time faculty who agree to use an authentic assignment developed by faculty (or a selection of authentic assignments from options developed by faculty) and participate in general education assessment activities (e.g., authentic assignments, submission of students' work, review of findings, recommend and implement curriculum modifications based on findings).
6. Serve as an appropriate general education requirement in one of the following areas: Communication, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities/Fine Arts, or Social/Behavioral Sciences.
7. Be general in nature and not "...narrowly focused on those skills, techniques, and procedures peculiar to a particular occupation or profession."
8. Count as a general education course at a majority of TCC's top five public four-year transfer institutions.

### **General Education Course Approval Workflow**

Faculty seeking approval to have a course considered as a general education course must follow the process below.

1. The faculty member(s) generates the general education course proposal to include the General Education Course Proposal Form, Criteria Response, Standard Assignment, Course Outline (available in i-INCURR) and Syllabus from faculty proposing the course. As part of the proposal creation, the faculty member will be expected to:
  - a. seek input from full-time faculty members at all campuses where the course is being taught (or proposed to be taught);
  - b. work closely with the department chair and/or academic dean, as appropriate; and
  - c. determine the transferability of the course. If not a course that typically transfers, this may include contacting four-year institutions and determining their willingness to accept the course for transfer.

2. Once complete, the proposal is submitted to the department chair, if applicable, for review and approval.
3. The proposal is submitted to the academic dean for approval.
4. The proposal is submitted to the Associate Vice President (AVP) for Academic Affairs for review, who will forward it to the GEC when/if the proposal sufficiently addresses all components.
5. The academic dean/faculty member will present the proposal to the General Education Committee.
6. The GEC's recommendation with supporting documentation is submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, via the AVP, for review and a final decision.

### ***Core Competencies Defined***

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and Tidewater Community College (TCC) have defined the general education core competencies that all graduates from associate degree programs should attain upon degree completion. Any course being considered for inclusion as a general education course must fully support at least one of these competencies.

1. *Civic Engagement*: Civic engagement is the ability to contribute to the civic life and well-being of local, national, and global communities as both a social responsibility and a life-long learning process. Degree graduates will demonstrate the knowledge and civic values necessary to become informed and contributing participants in a democratic society.
2. *Critical Thinking*: Critical thinking is the ability to use information, ideas and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Degree graduates will locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.
3. *Professional Readiness*: Professional readiness is the ability to work well with others and display situationally and culturally appropriate demeanor and behavior. Degree graduates will demonstrate skills important for successful transition into the workplace and pursuit of further education.
4. *Quantitative Literacy*: Quantitative literacy is the ability to perform accurate calculations, interpret quantitative information, apply and analyze relevant numerical data, and use results to support conclusions. Degree graduates will calculate, interpret, and use numerical and quantitative information in a variety of settings.
5. *Scientific Literacy*: Scientific literacy is the ability to apply the scientific method and related concepts and principles to make informed decisions and engage with issues related to the natural, physical, and social world. Degree graduates will recognize and know how to use the scientific method, and to evaluate empirical information.
6. *Written Communication*: Written communication is the ability to develop, convey, and exchange ideas in writing, as appropriate to a given context and audience. Degree graduates will express themselves effectively in a variety of written forms.

### ***General Education Requirement***

VCCS policy requires students to complete minimum general education requirements for all associate degree programs in the following areas (see VCCS Table 5-1 for specific credit requirements). Courses being considered for inclusion as an approved general education course must represent one of these requirements.

1. Communication
2. Mathematics
3. Humanities/Fine Arts

4. Natural Sciences
5. Social/Behavioral Sciences

***Evaluating Courses for Continued Inclusion as a General Education Course***

Annually, a portion of the courses considered to satisfy general education requirements will be evaluated on a rotating basis so that each course is reviewed at least once in a three-year period.

<b>General Education Area</b>
Social Sciences
Natural Sciences and Mathematics
Humanities
Communication

Additional review of general education courses will be initiated by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (or appointee).

The General Education Committee shall examine each course with the following questions in mind:

- **NEED.** Why is this course needed or appropriate as a general education course?
- **AUDIENCE.** Who is the intended audience for this course? Will this course serve a breadth of students?
- **CORE COMPETENCY.** Which of the core competencies does this course support? In what ways is the competency supported?
- **GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT.** Which of the five general education requirements does this course satisfy?
- **AUTHENTIC ASSIGNMENT.** What authentic assignments are in place for this class and how do these assignments support the core competency? To what extent are faculty using authentic assignments?
- **ASSESSMENT.** How does the course assess students' progress towards the core competency? To what extent are results being used by faculty to improve student learning in a core competency?
- **SCHEDULING.** How often and where is this course offered (# of sections per semester, campus)? Is the course being offered regularly and at a variety of days and times? What has the enrollment been in the course for the past two academic years?
- **TRANSFERABILITY.** How does the course transfer to four-year institutions?

Recommended Outcomes of the General Education Committee may include:

- approved inclusion/continued inclusion of the course as a general education offering;
- approved inclusion/continued inclusion of the course as a general education offering but subject to review in a subsequent semester;
- disapproval/removal of the course as a general education offering; or
- disapproval/removal of the course as a general education offering with a recommendation for inclusion as a transfer elective.

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