

## **General Education 2020: Connecting Perspectives Executive Summary**

The General Education Curriculum has not been substantially changed since 1998. A Task Force to review General Education (GE) at our University was convened in 2018. Soon after, the University-wide strategic planning process began to define the pillars of the forthcoming UA Strategic Plan. Education quickly emerged as a significant component. During the Ideation stage of the planning process, a re-envisioning of General Education was included amongst the initiatives enacted under Pillar 1.

The University's General Education curriculum helps University of Arizona graduates attain fundamental skills and a broad base of knowledge to respond effectively to a complex world.

### **What's New?**

#### *Office of General Education*

A new Executive Director for General Education has been hired to oversee the implementation and managing of the new program. The new Office of General Education, composed of a support team of faculty and staff, will partner with colleges/units on enrollment management and scheduling, provide instructor support, and advocate for high-quality learning and exploration for all students.

The following is a list of the current policies up for review. The transfer policies will be presented in January/February for review.

#### ***Substitutions for Approved General Education Courses (modified policy)***

No changes to this policy. Language has been added to clarify between the old and new programs.

#### ***GE Attribute Policy (new policy)***

All EP and BC courses will integrate the skills, methodologies, and/or contexts of one or more Attributes: Writing, Diversity & Equity, World Cultures & Societies, and/or Quantitative Reasoning. *Note: the word Attribute will be changed to Emphasis to avoid terminology confusion with UAccess.*

#### ***GE Curriculum Policy (modified to replace Tier One/Tier Two policy)***

Changes summarize the new parts of the proposed curriculum. Each piece of the new program has an individual policy below.

#### ***Double Use of Courses, Undergraduate Policy (modified policy)***

Language has been added to clarify between old and new programs. Also added the option for one Exploring Perspectives or Building Connections course to double dip with a major course. This is proposed because all students will be required to take the exact same general education set of courses. Unlike the current policies that allow for majors to satisfy a general education requirement (i.e. many science majors satisfy the Tier one or two Natural Sciences requirement with major science courses).

### ***GE Entry and Exit Courses Policy (new policy)***

*Bookend courses (2 units)*

Entry course: A new 1-unit course required of incoming students. The goals of the course are to facilitate:

- Introducing students to General Education & its conceptual foundations (perspective-taking, interdisciplinary thinking, reflection on learning)
- Start ePortfolios & develop digital literacy practices
- Transitioning to UArizona, including:
  - Supporting student well-being
  - Encouraging academic success

Exit course: A new 1-unit course designed to help students reflect upon and make meaning of the General Education experience through the refinement of their ePortfolio.

Transfer students will have an alternative opportunity depending on how much of the general education experience is completed prior to enrolling at UArizona.

### ***GE Exploring Perspective and Building Connections Policy (new policy)***

*Two course categories replace Tier 1 and 2 (21 units)*

Exploring Perspectives (EP) and Building Connections (BC). These new categories shift course goals from acquiring disciplinary knowledge (what we know) to practicing perspective-taking (how we reason and work) within and across various disciplines. Exploring Perspectives (Artist, Humanist, Natural Scientist, Social Scientist) and Building Connections categories are not meant to be sequential like Tier 1 and Tier 2 in the current General Education curriculum; rather, these new categories are meant to be complementary and can be taken in any order and/or concurrently.

### ***GE Foundations Policy (old policy updated)***

No changes to the Foundations courses (Writing, Mathematics and Second Language proficiency) are being proposed. The proposed policy change includes updated language.

### ***Science Courses that may apply to Tier One and Tier Two Natural Science Requirements (sunset policy)***

Due to the fact that all students take the Exploring Perspectives Natural Scientist course, this policy is not relevant to the new program. Requesting that it be sunsetted along with the old program.

### ***Signature Assignment Policy (new policy)***

All Exploring Perspectives and Building Connections courses are required to have at least one signature assignment. Signature assignments will be included in students' ePortfolios and will encourage students to engage subject matter in meaningful ways. These assignments will also be used in University/ABOR level outcomes assessments.

***Writing Emphasis Policy (modified policy)***

In alignment with the new curriculum, two items have been added to this original policy: The first is that all students are required to complete two General Education Writing Attribute courses. The second is that all writing emphasis courses will have at least 60% of the course grade based on written work.