
Memorandum to Presidents

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TO: Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community College
Statutory College Contacts

FROM: Shadi Shahedipour-Sandvik, Provost-in-Charge

SUBJECT: *Policy and Guidance: State University of New York General Education*

This memorandum provides guidance on the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees' Resolution 2021-48, *State University of New York General Education Policy*, adopted on November 9, 2021. The culmination of four years of collaborative work through shared governance and broad consultation, the policy directs the Chancellor to update SUNY General Education.

The primary goal of the SUNY General Education policy is to ensure equity for all SUNY undergraduate degree-seeking students, regardless of type of degree or area of study. This document supersedes Memorandum to Presidents ([Vol. 10, No. 1](#)), *Policy and Guidance: State University General Education Requirement*, dated May 28, 2010.

It modifies University policy on SUNY General Education, effective fall 2023, for new first-time students entering AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs; and effective fall 2024, for new first-time students entering AAS- and AOS-degree programs.

For questions about this memorandum, please contact the Office of the Provost at provost@suny.edu. This guidance, along with additional information and resources, is also available on the SUNY Academic Affairs website (see [SUNY General Education Framework](#)).

Copy: President, University Faculty Senate
President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges
President, Student Assembly
SUNY Chief Academic Officers, All Campuses
SUNY Registrars, All Campuses

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE
FOR
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
GENERAL EDUCATION**

DECEMBER 2021

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION

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SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT

The State University of New York's overarching goal is to empower students to meet the changing demands of the 21st-century. Embedded in this goal are SUNY's commitment to broad access to the highest quality education, deep and engaged learning, and overall student success.

SUNY General Education supports these goals by creating a system-wide framework—applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs—that addresses the fundamental aims of postsecondary undergraduate education, including proficiency with essential skills and competencies, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21st century global citizenry.

Moreover, SUNY General Education promotes equity by equipping SUNY undergraduates, regardless of background, program of study, or campus, with foundational capacities fostered through a broad liberal education to prepare them for further study, work, life, and global citizenship. It encourages students to explore subjects and learning experiences beyond their intended major and fosters a commitment to personal growth and life-long learning.

Importantly, SUNY General Education supports seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions and it ensures consistency in expected system-level learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches.

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SUNY General Education (GE) is a system-wide framework applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs that addresses the fundamental goals of higher education, including proficiency with essential skills, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21st century global citizenry.

SUNY's General Education rests on the following guiding principles:

1. SUNY GE promotes equity by equipping all SUNY undergraduates—regardless of background, program of study, or campus—with foundational capacities fostered through a broad liberal education to prepare them for further study, work, life, and global citizenship.
2. SUNY GE encourages students to explore subjects and learning experiences beyond their intended major and fosters a commitment to personal growth and life-long learning.
3. SUNY GE aligns with SUNY's commitment to deep and engaged learning and encourages persistence, completion, and success.
4. SUNY GE supports seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions; it ensures consistency in expected learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches.
5. SUNY GE specifies minimum requirements; campuses may set additional expectations, as long as those expectations remain consistent with SUNY policy, NYS regulation and education law, and institutional accreditation standards and expectations.

6. SUNY GE is internally consistent and coherent, and readily understood by students, faculty, staff, and other internal and external stakeholders.
7. SUNY GE includes clear and measurable student learning outcomes, assessed by campuses on an ongoing basis to ensure high-quality educational experiences for all undergraduate students; similarly, SUNY GE policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is effective, relevant, and up-to-date.

OVERVIEW OF THE SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The SUNY GE framework includes twelve categories of knowledge, skills and competencies—ten knowledge and skills areas expose students to different ways of knowing so that they can make reasoned judgements outside as well as inside their academic field, and enabling them to develop diverse perspectives and global understanding; and two core competencies that extend beyond discipline-specific knowledge and skills. Among the specific knowledge and skills categories is a new requirement, *Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice*. This requirement aligns with the SUNY Board of Trustees’ *Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (adopted September 10, 2015) as well as SUNY’s *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Phase I Action Plan* (2021), which recommends including a diversity category in the general education requirements. In addition, explicitly delineated skills and competencies in quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, oral and written communication, critical thinking and reasoning, and information literacy help to ensure SUNY graduates have the 21st century knowledge, skills, and competencies they need, while also satisfying institutional accreditation expectations. While Middle States also requires technological competency, disciplines vary in terms of the technologies needed to support scholarly, creative, and applied endeavors. Campus faculty can best determine what constitutes technological competency in their respective disciplinary area and design curricula accordingly. This approach to a MSCHE-required competency further illustrates a key feature of the SUNY GE framework: it provides flexibility for campuses to develop innovative and robust local general education programs for their respective undergraduate degrees.

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS, AND CORE COMPETENCIES

1. Knowledge and Skills Areas (**a minimum of 7 of 10 categories of knowledge and skills are required for AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs**)
 - The following four are specifically required for all undergraduate-degree programs***
 - Communication – written and oral
 - Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice
 - Mathematics (and quantitative reasoning)
 - Natural Sciences (and scientific reasoning)¹
 - In addition, a minimum of three of the following six are required for AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs***
 - Humanities
 - Social Sciences
 - The Arts
 - US History and Civic Engagement
 - World History and Global Awareness
 - World Languages
2. Core Competencies – **both required for all undergraduate-degree programs**
 - Critical Thinking and Reasoning
 - Information Literacy

¹ Campuses may approve substitutions for this requirement, as explained in the category description below.

See **Section B** in the procedural guidance, including the summary **Table 1**, for more details on SUNY GE required minimum categories and credits by specific degree type.

The required student learning outcomes for each of the 12 categories of the SUNY General Education framework—ten knowledge and skills areas and two core competencies—are below. Note that the learning outcomes for each category are intentionally broad, to ensure seamless transfer as well as faculty flexibility. Campus faculty shall engage with the learning outcomes and develop language appropriate to the level of challenge to students warranted by the discipline and college-level study. Faculty may find Bloom’s Taxonomy and its subsequent revision² helpful in this regard. Note also, the guidance specific to each category.

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS

Communication – Written and Oral (Required)

Students will

- research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details;
- demonstrate coherent college-level communication (written and oral) that informs, persuades, or otherwise engages with an audience;
- evaluate communication for substance, bias, and intended effect; and
- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve written and oral communication.

Guidance

Approvable courses for this category include

- *a combination of two courses, one of which focuses more on written communication, the other on oral communication;*
- *a single course that combines written and oral communication;*
- *writing-intensive courses that also include sufficient attention to speaking skills;*
- *speaking-intensive courses that also include sufficient attention to writing skills.*

In considering programs such as “Writing Across the Curriculum,” campuses shall ensure that required student learning outcomes are taught, practiced, and assessed in all courses involved.

Remedial or ESL courses are not acceptable within this category; nor shall students place out of this SUNY GE requirement by high scores on Regents and/or SAT (or similar) exams.

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (Required)

Students will

- describe the historical and contemporary societal factors that shape the development of individual and group identity involving race, class, and gender;
- analyze the role that complex networks of social structures and systems play in the creation and perpetuation of the dynamics of power, privilege, oppression, and opportunity; and

² See, for example, <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.net/>

- apply the principles of rights, access, equity, and autonomous participation to past, current, or future social justice action.

Guidance

Campuses may expand on the definition of individual and group identity to include additional aspects of diversity. However, consistent with SUNY Seamless Transfer policy, if a sending institution certifies that a student has completed the Diversity: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice requirement, the receiving institution must accept that this SUNY general education requirement is satisfied.

As called for in the Board of Trustees' resolution, SUNY System Administration will work with campuses to ensure faculty have the training and resources to support the teaching and learning needs in this category.

***Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)
(Required)***

Students will demonstrate mathematical skills and quantitative reasoning, including the ability to

- interpret and draw inferences from appropriate mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, or schematics;
- represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, or verbally as appropriate; and
- employ quantitative methods such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, or statistics to solve problems.

Guidance

N.B.: Campuses may approve liberal arts and sciences courses outside the disciplinary area of Mathematics (e.g., courses in statistics, computer science, data science, formal/symbolic logic, etc.) for this required category, provided the student learning outcomes for Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning) are met within the course.

Remedial courses are not acceptable within this category; nor shall students place out of this SUNY GE requirement by high scores on Regents and/or SAT (or similar) exams.

***Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)
(Required)***

Students will demonstrate scientific reasoning applied to the natural world, including

- an understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of data analysis or mathematical modeling; and
- application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

Guidance

N.B.: Campuses may approve liberal arts and sciences courses outside the natural sciences (e.g., in social sciences) in lieu of the Natural Sciences required category, as long as the student learning outcomes include demonstrating scientific reasoning applied to the respective disciplinary area(s). In such cases, the campus shall ensure that transcripts clearly indicate that required Scientific Reasoning has been satisfied outside the Natural Sciences (e.g., in Social Sciences).

For courses in the traditional natural science disciplines (e.g., chemistry, biology, physics, etc.) the inclusion of a laboratory component, though highly desirable, is not necessary for campus approval. However, because many majors (e.g., in STEM- and health-related fields) require college-level laboratory science, including for transfer, students must be advised to select courses appropriate to the current and/or planned program of study and educational goals.

Humanities

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities; and
- recognize and analyze nuance and complexity of meaning through critical reflections on text, visual images, or artifacts.

Guidance

This category does not specify a particular humanities discipline or approach.

Consistent with the intention to maintain splitting the Arts and Humanities into two separate categories, “performance” courses would generally not be approvable in this category unless supported by documentation that they include a preponderance of scholarly humanistic study.

Standard scholarly histories of the arts are approvable in both the Humanities and Arts categories.

Social Sciences

Students will

- describe major concepts and theories of at least one discipline in the social sciences; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena.

Guidance

Campuses are encouraged to approve courses that include a comprehensive introduction to a social science discipline.

For inter- or multi-disciplinary courses (e.g., women’s studies or the social science portions of integrated curricula), or courses that otherwise fall outside the envelope of traditional social science disciplines, course descriptions and syllabi shall demonstrate clearly:

- *that they teach understanding of social science methodologies;*
- *which discipline(s) in the social sciences they draw on for concepts and theories; and*
- *that the majority of the text(s) used fall clearly within the social sciences.*

The Arts

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

Guidance

Both performance-oriented and scholarly/historical offerings in the expressive arts are approvable for this category.

When considering performance-oriented courses for approval in the SUNY GE Arts category, campuses should include courses that engage students in the creative process directly while also fostering broader understanding of the principal form of artistic expression (e.g., appreciation, theory, history, aesthetic principles) so that these courses satisfy NYSED requirements for liberal arts and sciences.³ Courses imparting purely technical skills with no demonstration of the broader understanding are not approvable.

Standard scholarly histories of the arts are approvable in both the Humanities and Arts categories.

US History and Civic Engagement

Students will

- demonstrate understanding of United States' society and/or history, including the diversity of individuals and communities that make up the nation;
- understand the role of individual participation in US communities and government; and
- apply historical and contemporary evidence to draw, support, or verify conclusions.

Guidance

In addition to providing information about the connection of the United States' past to its present, approvable courses in this category will focus on the role of individuals within communities, and developing civic understanding and other skills for engaging in the dynamics of the diverse and pluralistic society which comprises the public life of the United States.

World History and Global Awareness

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of a broad outline of world history and/or the development of the distinctive features of at least one civilization or culture in relation to other regions of the world; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the structures, systems, and interrelationships among civilizations and cultures within historical and/or contemporary contexts, and their impact on wellbeing and sustainability.

Guidance

Courses on specialized topics or periods are approvable so long as the materials demonstrate that the primary focus of the course relates to larger developments of world history. The core of the course must be central to world history and global awareness, and the treatment of that core placed in broader cultural perspective so that students gain an acquaintance with world history and not just specialized knowledge of one narrowly defined topic.

World Languages

Students will

- exhibit basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a world language; and
- demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

³ See <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-curriculum#c>

Guidance

The first college semester, or above, of a world language constitutes an approvable course in this category. American Sign Language courses are also approvable for SUNY GE World Languages.

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COMPETENCIES

All undergraduate degree-seeking students must demonstrate the required student learning outcomes in two core competencies, *Critical Thinking and Reasoning* and *Information Literacy*.

***Critical Thinking and Reasoning
(Required)***

Students will

- clearly articulate an issue or problem;
- identify, analyze, and evaluate ideas, data, and arguments as they occur in their own or others' work;
- acknowledge limitations such as perspective and bias; and
- develop well-reasoned (logical) arguments to form judgments and/or draw conclusions.

Guidance

Students need to acquire critical thinking and reasoning skills appropriate to the demands of the 21st century citizen, and campuses must have flexibility to implement and assess these learning outcomes across a diverse range of academic programs.

The Critical Thinking and Reasoning competency is not necessarily associated with any one course, though the student learning outcomes may be required in one or more courses. In either case, campuses must ensure that the required learning outcomes are included in each undergraduate degree curriculum.

***Information Literacy
(Required)***

Students will

- locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline;
- evaluate information with an awareness of authority, validity, and bias; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination.

Guidance

Students need to acquire information literacy appropriate to the demands of the 21st century citizen, and campuses must have flexibility to implement and assess these learning outcomes across a diverse range of academic programs.

The Information Literacy core competency is not necessarily associated with any one course, though the student learning outcomes may be required in one or more specific courses. In either case, campuses must ensure that the required learning outcomes are included in each undergraduate degree curriculum.

PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE FOR SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION

A. SUNY General Education Framework and Campus General Education Program(s)

A campus shall have one or more general education program(s) consistent with the requirements of the SUNY General Education framework. Each such program shall enable graduates of SUNY undergraduate degree programs to meet the required SUNY GE framework knowledge and skills areas, and core competencies. The campus Chief Academic Officer shall provide attestation that all degree programs are reviewed for consistency with the SUNY GE framework and programs revised accordingly, as necessary.

- i. **SUNY GE Course Review, Approval, Reporting.** Campuses shall be responsible for reviewing and approving SUNY General Education courses. SUNY System Administration will provide guidance and support, including maintaining the CourSES reporting platform and the System-level database of approved SUNY GE courses, both current and historic. SUNY System Administration will no longer review individual campus courses for approval. Each campus shall have a faculty review process for adding, removing, or revising SUNY GE courses and updating their official list of approved SUNY GE courses. Each campus-approved SUNY GE course shall be aligned with the SUNY GE framework student learning outcomes for the respective category (or categories). Once approved, the campus shall report the SUNY GE course to System Administration via CourSES, which will populate the System-level database of SUNY GE courses. Approved SUNY GE courses shall not be removed from the database of approved SUNY GE courses, unless the student learning outcomes have changed and the course no longer meets the category for which it was approved and/or the course is no longer offered. In such cases, the course and its effective dates must remain on the list of approved SUNY GE courses for the historical record, so that students who had completed the course in the past will continue to receive credit for the category. The campus shall ensure its local database is consistent with the System-level database.
- ii. **Syllabi for SUNY GE Courses.** In keeping with good practice and the expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and SUNY, the campus will ensure syllabi for SUNY GE courses make clear which SUNY GE student learning outcomes are covered.
- iii. **Approval of Courses for which a Prerequisite in the Same Discipline is an Approved SUNY GE Course.** If a campus-approved SUNY GE course is a prerequisite for other courses in the same discipline, campuses are encouraged to consider those courses for approval as well, as long as the learning outcomes build on knowledge and skills, consistent with the applicable SUNY GE learning outcomes. For example, if Biology 101 is an approved SUNY GE natural science course and a prerequisite for Biology 102, Biology 102 may be an approvable SUNY GE natural science course.
- iv. **Approval of Courses in Multiple Categories.** Campus faculty will determine whether a course satisfies student learning outcomes in multiple categories. A course approved in multiple categories must contain sufficient content to address all of the learning outcomes for each category. The campus shall ensure sufficient breadth in its general education program(s).
- v. **Equivalencies.** Consistent with SUNY-wide policy, a student may satisfy the requirements of a SUNY GE category by demonstrating college-level proficiency in the student learning outcomes through Prior Learning Assessment (aka Credit by Evaluation); campus faculty will make such determinations; the student transcript, including any general education addenda, will reflect the credits awarded and category(ies) satisfied by the assessed learning.
- vi. **Lower-division Courses.** In both associate- and baccalaureate-degree programs, SUNY General Education helps prepare students for upper-division study across the liberal arts and sciences and in the major. Consistent with SUNY's commitment to seamless transfer and student completion and

success, the campus must ensure that students are able to complete the SUNY GE requirements within the first 60 credits of all associate-, BA-, and BS-degree programs. For specialized baccalaureate degree programs (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.), see section B for more detail.

- vii. **Advanced or Upper-division Courses.** To promote seamless transfer and timely degree completion, the campus is encouraged to complement and build on student academic preparation and prior learning by offering courses that further enrich knowledge and exercise skills. Such courses that achieve the relevant student learning outcomes may help students who transfer from non-SUNY institutions.
- viii. **Review of Undergraduate Degree Programs.** The campus shall review all undergraduate degree programs, to determine consistency with the SUNY GE framework and revise programs accordingly.
- ix. **Student Waivers.** Where appropriate, in accordance with SUNY-wide and local campus academic policies, the campus shall afford students the opportunity to obtain a waiver, for example, as a reasonable accommodation for a learning or other disability. Individual student waivers are at the discretion of the campus CAO or designee, and the reasons should be documented, as appropriate. Note: if a student obtains a waiver of a category, the category will be waived but the student will still need to satisfy the GE credit requirement for the program.
- x. **Programmatic Waivers.** The campus may seek a waiver of the minimum number of SUNY GE knowledge and skills areas (as specified in section B below) and/or maximum credits of a degree level for a specific academic program in cases where the program's curriculum is governed by external standards such as specialized accreditation. Note: The four specifically required areas may not be waived. The campus may request review and approval of program waivers from the SUNY Provost.
- xi. **Information and Advisement for Students.** Consistent with State regulation, institutional accreditation,⁴ and long-standing SUNY policy, the campus shall provide information and timely advisement to prospective and enrolled students about SUNY GE, and local and programmatic general education requirements through its catalogs, websites, student program planning tools, and/or other sources. The campus must ensure the information is clear, accurate, complete, current, and easy to find. The Office of the Provost will work with campuses to help make information about general education requirements accessible to students and their advisors. Information should include, but is not limited to: general education requirements, including SUNY GE and local requirements; courses that students may use to satisfy SUNY GE, along with their availability and transferability; any specific general education requirements for particular majors; campus policies on grades in general education courses for native and transfer students; and effective date(s) for SUNY GE policies.
- xii. **Alignment of Degree Type with Intended Purpose.** In order to minimize the possibility of students losing credit or experiencing an extended course of study due to the need to take additional credits in transfer to baccalaureate-level degree programs from programs which are not designed for transfer, it is crucial for campuses to review the types of programs they offer in the context of the needs of the students they serve. In cases where students enroll in an AAS program, but intend to transfer to a BA or BS, general education expectations may not align and students will have to take additional credits in order to graduate from the baccalaureate degree program. An assessment of whether or not students from applied degree programs transfer into BA or BS programs would

⁴ See MSCHE Standard III, criterion 3: *An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: ...3. Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.*

indicate whether the applied program (AAS or AOS) should be revised to a transfer program. Even if transfer trends do not support changing the program award, the institution should clearly indicate in all publications whether the program is intended to lead to transfer and/or prepare students directly for the workforce.

- xiii. **Assessment of the General Education Program.** Each campus with one or more general education program(s) shall develop and implement a plan for the organized and systematic assessment of their general education program(s) that meets or exceeds the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The plan shall indicate where in the curricula the learning outcomes for the SUNY GE framework knowledge and skills areas and core competencies are addressed and assessed (typically through curriculum mapping), and how the results are used to improve teaching and learning (MTP Vol. 10, No. 2, II. D).

B. SUNY General Education Credit and Category Requirements

The SUNY General Education framework is foundational in nature and relevant to *every* student seeking a SUNY undergraduate degree, while being consistent with institutional accreditation requirements⁵ and applicable New York State Education Department curriculum expectations.⁶

In both associate- and baccalaureate-degree programs, SUNY General Education helps prepare students for upper-division study across the liberal arts and sciences as well as requirements in the major. Consistent with SUNY's commitment to seamless transfer and student completion and success, campuses must ensure that students can complete the applicable SUNY GE requirements within the first 60 credits of undergraduate-degree programs, as specified below:

For AA-, AS-, BA-, and BS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 30 credits of SUNY GE approved Liberal Arts and Sciences during the first 60 credits of study;
- A minimum of seven (of ten) knowledge and skills areas, including the four specifically required; and
- The two core competencies.

For specialized baccalaureate-degree programs (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.), the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 30 credits of SUNY GE approved Liberal Arts and Sciences, with at least 20 credits completed during the first 60 credits of study;
- A minimum of seven (of ten) knowledge and skills areas, with a minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas completed during the first 60 credits; and
- The two core competencies.

Consistent with SUNY's commitment to establish a strong foundation for every SUNY student seeking an undergraduate degree, along with institutional accreditation expectations and NYSED degree requirements, the campus' required general education program also must be included in AAS degrees.

For AAS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 20 credits of SUNY GE approved Liberal Arts and Sciences;
- A minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas; and
- The two core competencies.

⁵ Middle States Commission on Higher Education <https://www.msche.org/>

⁶ See NYSED, <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-curriculum#>

Students in AOS-degree programs must also meet the campus general education program’s required knowledge, skills, and competencies. Whether accomplished by designating freestanding SUNY GE approved liberal arts and sciences courses and/or embedding required general education content into applied courses, curriculum mapping will help ensure the institution can demonstrate where required general education instruction is taking place and assessed.

For AOS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- A minimum of zero credits of SUNY GE approved Liberal Arts and Sciences (more LAS credits may be added, but none are required);
- A minimum of the four specifically required SUNY GE knowledge and skills areas (freestanding or embedded); and
- The two core competencies (freestanding or embedded).

The table below is adapted from the NYSED Policy Statement on Liberal Arts and Sciences,⁷ which provides guidance intended to assist institutions of higher education in New York State in meeting the requirements of the Rules of the Board of Regents, Section 3.47 (c). The SUNY General Education framework requirements are consistent with applicable NYSED Regulations and curriculum expectations.

TABLE 1. NYSED AND SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK REQUIRED LAS CREDITS, MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS, AND CORE COMPETENCIES

Degree and minimum required total program credits	NYSED Requirements		SUNY General Education Framework		
	Minimum Proportion of LAS Content	Minimum Number of LAS Credits	Minimum # SUNY GE approved LAS Credits	Minimum # SUNY GE Knowledge & Skills Areas	Minimum # SUNY GE Core Competencies
Associate in Occupational Studies (60)	0	0	0	4 Embedded and/or freestanding	2 Embedded and/or freestanding
Associate in Arts (A.A.) (60)	$\frac{3}{4}$	45	30	7/10	2
Associate in Science (A.S.) (60)	$\frac{1}{2}$	30	30	7/10	2
Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) (60)	$\frac{1}{3}$	20	20	4/10	2
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) (120)	$\frac{3}{4}$	90	30	7/10	2
Bachelor of Science (B.S.) (120)	$\frac{1}{2}$	60	30	7/10	2
Specialized baccalaureate degrees (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.) (120)	$\frac{1}{4}$	30	30 *	7/10*	2

*For specialized baccalaureate degrees, at least 20 credits and a minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas must be completed during the first 60 credits of study.

⁷ See NYSED, <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-curriculum#>

As shown in the table above, specific proportions of LAS are required in state regulation for various degree types. These requirements help to ensure breadth of study integral to a program of general education. It should be noted, however, that in some extenuating circumstances, when necessary (e.g., to meet program accreditation requirements), general education learning outcomes may need to be incorporated into courses in the major. In such cases, the campus must ensure that minimum LAS requirements are satisfied. The campus should confer with its assigned SUNY program reviewer/liaison, as needed.

Note that a course approved to meet a core competency does not count toward the SUNY GE credit requirement unless the course also satisfies the learning outcomes in one or more knowledge and skills area(s).

C. Seamless Transfer

One of the goals of the SUNY General Education framework is to support seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions; it ensures consistency in expected learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches. The campus Chief Academic Officer shall provide attestation that all degree programs ensure local compliance with Seamless Transfer Requirements (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; V.B.i.), which includes the transfer of general education courses. Consistent with the Policy and Guidance: Seamless Transfer Requirements (MTP, Vol. 13, No. 3):

- i. Local general education requirements beyond the SUNY GE shall not require a transfer student to exceed the number of credits to graduation required of native students in the same program (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.vi.).
- ii. If a SUNY sending institution certifies that a student has completed SUNY GE, then the receiving institution must accept that requirement as being met (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.vii.).
- iii. If a SUNY sending institution certifies that a student has completed a SUNY GE knowledge and skills area, then the receiving institution must accept that requirement as being met. If the transfer student has completed SUNY GE areas that are different from the SUNY GE areas required by the receiving institution, the receiving institution may require the transfer student to fulfill the additional general education areas as long as it does not require the transfer student to exceed the number of credits to graduation that are required of students who began their college education at the same institution (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.viii.).
- iv. Each SUNY campus shall accept credit from transfer students for successfully completing SUNY GE framework courses (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.).
- v. A passing grade counts as successful completion for the SUNY GE area at any campus; transfer of credit is guaranteed if a course is successfully completed with a grade of C or above. Each campus has discretion about whether a particular course grade satisfies local graduation requirements outside SUNY GE, provided that the campus treats native and transfer students the same (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.i.).

- vi. Successfully completed Pass/Fail courses may be accepted at the discretion of the campus, but transfer is not guaranteed (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.ii.).⁸
- vii. A sending campus shall provide a transcript, including any General Education transcript addenda (GETA) for each transferring student, and a receiving campus shall accept the transcript(s) as certification of completed SUNY GE (MTP Vol. 10, No.1; II.D.iv.). Methods of transcribing courses may be periodically reviewed and revised, in consultation with SUNY stakeholders, in order to remain current with advances in technology.
- viii. Consistent with prior SUNY policy, decisions regarding the transfer of SUNY GE courses can be appealed at the system and campus level, as described below.

Student Appeals

- a. All students who have been accepted or are currently enrolled at SUNY campuses and who do not agree with a campus decision regarding acceptance or placement of general education courses and categories earned elsewhere in SUNY are allowed to appeal. Appeals must start at the campus level, and may proceed to the system level if necessary (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.i.).
- b. Information and instructions regarding campus and system appeals processes shall be posted on campus websites in an easily accessible and understandable manner. Contact information should be made available, including updated information regarding the system-level appeals process (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).
- c. If students do not agree with their local campus decision regarding the appeal, or have not received a campus response in 15 business days, the student may appeal to the SUNY Provost (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).

Campus Appeals to SUNY Provost

- a. A SUNY receiving campus may appeal having to accept a SUNY GE and/or Transfer Path course from a SUNY sending campus (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.i.).
- b. A sending campus may report a decision by a receiving campus not to accept a SUNY GE or Transfer Path course (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).
- c. After receiving an appeal request, the SUNY Provost's Office will work with the campuses to resolve the concern (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.iii.).

D. Implementation Timeline and Transition

The updated SUNY General Education is effective with the start of the fall 2023 semester, for new first-time students entering AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs; and effective with the start of the fall 2024 semester, for new first-time students entering AAS- and AOS-degree programs.

Continuing, returning, and transfer students having entered SUNY as new students prior to the implementation date for this SUNY GE policy have the right to complete the campus GE requirements in place at the time of first-time enrollment; the campus may also provide students the option of fulfilling the requirements under the new SUNY GE policy.

⁸ Note exception: See memorandum from Tod A. Laursen, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, April 7, 2020, "Due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding SUNY's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when evaluating general education course credit earned during the Spring 2020 term by incoming transfer students, transfer of credit is guaranteed at all SUNY campuses if a SUNY general education course is successfully completed with any passing grade, including a 'P' in a Pass/Fail grading system." This exception applies only to general education course credit earned during the Spring 2020 term and thus does not impact the revised SUNY General Education requirements described in this guidance.

APPENDIX

SUNY Board of Trustees' Resolution 2021-48, State University of New York General Education Policy

MEMORANDUM

November 9, 2021

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. Jim Malatras, Chancellor

SUBJECT: State University of New York General Education Policy

Action Requested

The proposed resolution establishes an updated SUNY General Education Framework applicable to all students pursuing a SUNY undergraduate degree. It directs the Chancellor or designee to work with campus leadership and faculty to implement local general education and undergraduate degree program requirements that are consistent with the SUNY General Education Framework, effective fall 2023 for A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate degree programs, and no later than fall 2024 for A.A.S. and A.O.S. degree programs.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the mission of the State University of New York is to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of all students, and to address local, regional and state needs and goals; and

Whereas the State University is directed to exercise care to develop and maintain a balance of its human and physical resources in meeting its obligation to provide undergraduate education that reflects the opportunity for individual choice and the needs of society, and promotes appropriate program articulation between its State-operated institutions and community colleges; and

Whereas by Resolution 98-241, adopted on December 15, 1998, the SUNY Board of Trustees established a SUNY General Education Requirement for all baccalaureate students; and

Whereas by Resolution 2010-006, adopted on January 19, 2010, the SUNY Board of Trustees enhanced flexibility in the SUNY General Education Requirement; and

Whereas by Resolution 2012-089, adopted on December 17, 2012, the SUNY Board of Trustees included each curriculum leading to an A.A. and A.S. degree in the SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY GER); and

Whereas in May 2017, the SUNY Provost convened a broadly representative advisory group, to determine if the SUNY GER needed review, and that group recommended moving forward with such review and offered initial suggestions for a three-phase process; and

Whereas Phase I of the SUNY GER review was co-led by the presidents of the University Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges, charged with

conducting an environmental scan of national, state, and system models of general education, and accreditation requirements, producing research papers that reported on the general context and made recommendations for consideration in the revision process; and

Whereas Phase II was led by the SUNY Provost who empaneled the General Education Advisory Committee, broadly representative and co-chaired by a SUNY Chief Academic Officer and a SUNY Distinguished Faculty Professor, charged with developing initial recommendations for a general education framework in the context of a proposed policy revision, informed by the faculty governance-led work in Phase I; and

Whereas the General Education Advisory Committee's initial recommendations for a SUNY General Education Framework was distributed for System-wide comment, and extensive feedback was received and then analyzed in collaboration with faculty governance leaders and other experts, to inform refinements and final recommendations to the SUNY Provost; and

Whereas the current SUNY General Education Requirement does not include A.A.S. and A.O.S. degrees; does not align fully with Middle States accreditation standards or NYS Commissioner's regulations, does not address Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice, and is outdated in other ways; and

Whereas the SUNY Board of Trustees has elevated the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in SUNY by creating a standing Board Committee, and the Chancellor has made it a top priority for all campuses, faculty, staff, and students by initiating the 25-point Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan that includes general education; and

Whereas the proposed SUNY General Education Framework aligns with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation Standards for general education and New York State Education Department liberal arts and sciences requirements for degrees; and

Whereas the proposed SUNY General Education Framework's updated knowledge, skills, and core competencies are necessitated by increasingly rapid change in academia, business, and social discourse; and

Whereas the proposed SUNY General Education Framework ensures seamless and successful transfer for SUNY students and continues to be consistent with SUNY's strategic and master plans since 1972, and is of central importance to increasing degree completion and closing New York State's degree attainment gap; and

Whereas the SUNY General Education Framework should be applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs, to address the fundamental goals of higher education, including proficiency in essential skills, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21st century global citizenry; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Board of Trustees recognizes the broadly representative individuals who participated in the research and design phases of the general education framework process and applauds their hard work and dedication; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor or designee be, and hereby is, directed to implement the new SUNY General Education Framework (Phase III), which includes the updated knowledge and skills categories of Communication – written and oral; Diversity,

Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; Mathematics (and quantitative reasoning); Natural Sciences (and scientific reasoning); Humanities; Social Sciences; the Arts; US History and Civic Engagement; World History and Global Awareness; and World Languages; as well as the Core Competencies of Critical Thinking and Reasoning; and Information Literacy (see Attachment A); and be it further

Resolved that the SUNY Provost develop additional guidance and procedures for implementation in consultation with college presidents, chief academic officers, the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY Student Assembly, and other appropriate stakeholders, effective fall 2023 for new students entering A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate degree programs, and no later than fall 2024 for new students entering A.A.S. and A.O.S. degree programs; and, be it further

Resolved that SUNY System Administration will work with campuses to ensure that faculty have the training and resources to support the teaching and learning needs in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice category; and, be it further

Resolved that consistent with the SUNY Assessment policy (Trustees Resolution 2010-039), each campus' regular assessment of its general education curriculum (or curricula) shall include the assessment of student learning in terms of the student learning outcomes associated with the SUNY General Education Framework, such that the assessment meets or exceeds Middle States' expectations and the results are used to improve teaching and learning; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor, or designee, be, and hereby is, directed to assess periodically the SUNY General Education Framework, in consultation with presidents, chief academic officers, the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY Student Assembly, and other appropriate stakeholders, to ensure it remains relevant to changing conditions and the needs of students and businesses; and provide periodic reports of such activity to the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Background

I. SUNY General Education Requirement History

The SUNY Board of Trustees established a 30-credit SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY GER) for all baccalaureate students, including ten required academic areas and two required competency areas, by adopting Resolution 98-241 on December 15, 1998. The purpose was to provide an intellectual foundation, ensure curricular depth, and encourage academic exploration across disciplines.

On January 19, 2010, the Board enhanced flexibility in the SUNY General Education Requirement by adopting Resolution 2010-006. This maintained the required 30-credits but reduced the number of required academic areas from ten to seven, with mathematics and basic communication required, as well as at least five of the following eight academic areas: natural science, social science, American history, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, humanities, the arts, and foreign languages. This enabled students to take multiple courses in some academic areas.

Consistent with SUNY's long-standing commitment to transfer student success and because A.A. and A.S. programs are designed as transfer degrees, in 2012 the Board added those degrees to the current SUNY General Education Requirement by adopting Resolution 2012-089. Thereby, each curriculum leading to an A.A., A.S., and bachelor's degree shall enable students to complete seven of ten SUNY General Education Requirement academic areas (including mathematics and basic communication), two competency areas, and 30 credits of SUNY General Education courses. These requirements are to be

completed in the first two years of full-time study (or 60 credits, whichever is greater), so that associate degree students make progress equal to baccalaureate students.

II. SUNY General Education Requirement Revision Process

Recognizing that the SUNY General Education Requirement included outdated language was out of alignment with accreditation requirements in that it did not include some degrees, and that some campuses were revising their local requirements, the SUNY Provost convened a shared governance advisory group, comprised of 12 University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY Student Assembly governance representatives; six SUNY provosts, three System administrators, and a Distinguished Academy member, to a one-day SUNY General Education Requirement Retreat on 5/23/17, to consider whether SUNY GER needed to be revised. The broadly representative participants at this pre-planning retreat advised that it was time to revisit the SUNY General Education Requirement and offered suggestions for a three-phase comprehensive review process and initial guiding principles.

Phase I of the SUNY GER review was led by the presidents of the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. This working group was composed predominately of faculty selected by the co-chairs and charged with the analysis of national, system, accreditation, and SUNY campus models of general education. After two years of study, the working group produced a White Paper that reported on the larger issues and a Green Paper that made recommendations; and Phase II was led by the SUNY Provost's General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC), co-chaired by a Chief Academic Officer and a Distinguished Teaching Professor, comprised of ten faculty members and a broad representation of other impacted stakeholders, charged with developing initial recommendations for a general education framework in the context of a proposed policy revision (see Attachment B). Informed by the faculty-governance work from Phase 1, the full membership of GEAC reviewed its subcommittee work and prepared a draft General Education Framework which the Provost disseminated throughout the SUNY System, resulting in robust campus feedback. Working collaboratively with faculty governance leaders and other experts, the Provost's team analyzed the voluminous feedback to refine the Framework for the Provost's consideration. On September 8, 2021, Provost-in-Charge Sandvik distributed the refined SUNY General Education Framework and draft guidance, and invited campus feedback on draft implementation guidance.

Phase III is implementation of the new SUNY General Education Framework (Attachment A). The Phase III implementation plan was adjusted to its current state after consultation with the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and aligning the implementation process with their resolution. Through local shared governance processes, campuses shall implement the SUNY General Education framework in accordance with all applicable SUNY policies, Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation standards, and New York State Education Department regulations and procedures. SUNY System Administration will publish implementation guidance in the form of a Provost's Memorandum to Presidents. Campuses shall refer to these guidelines, which will establish the consistency needed to ensure seamless transfer, while allowing the flexibility for campuses to meet the needs of their students. SUNY Provost Office staff will provide ongoing guidance and continuing oversight of general education policy implementation.