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# The General Education Program

# A Reach Toward Excellence

**Effective Fall 2009**


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**Rationale**

**The General Education Program** at Delaware State University is predicated on the University's definition of **the educated person**. Delaware State University, through its general education curriculum and its specialized major curricula, provides a set of academic experiences designed to produce within students the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower them to solve problems, clarify values, secure and sustain meaningful professions and careers, and embrace learning as a life-long process. Thus, Delaware State University aims to graduate an educated person possessing the following characteristics:

- Fundamental skills in communication, computation, and critical thinking necessary for life-long learning
- A sense of self-dignity and self-worth
- An ever-expanding capacity for appreciating, understanding, and sympathizing with the human condition in all its variations of cultural, social, racial, ethnic, moral, and physical diversity
- Knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful and productive living
- A desire to know more about one's environment and the global perspective.

**The General Education Program** is the University's commitment to providing breadth and depth to students' academic, cultural, social, moral, ethical, and physical development during their undergraduate experience.
The General Education Program recognizes that teaching and learning embrace several bodies of knowledge, skills, and sensibilities that combine to form the **whole student**. Therefore, at Delaware State University the goals of the General Education Program are divided into those **areas of study** that best describe the experiences that all students are required to complete in order to complement those experiences that the specialized curriculum in each major program of study provides.

**Goals**

The following goals of general education speak to breadth, integration, and scaffolding of knowledge, skills, and sensibilities that are inherent in the mission of the University. The goals of general education are the following:

1. General education should focus on the essential attitudes and behaviors that promote reflection and encourage life-long learning, wellness, and engagement with ideas, issues, and new experiences.
2. General education should foster the development of critical thinking; curiosity about the social and natural worlds in which we live; appreciation for the complexities of knowledge and tolerance for ambiguity; and a capacity for attaining perspective on one's own life through self-examination and the study of others.
3. General education should engage students in activities that strengthen their ability to read, write, speak, listen, and think effectively.
4. General education should provide students with opportunities to examine and reflect upon moral and ethical problems and issues.
5. General education should enable students to use technology in order to access and manipulate information competently.
6. General education should enable students to understand and appreciate the ways social and cultural differences and similarities structure human experiences and knowledge -- in the arts, the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. As an important aspect of general education, students should understand multicultural dimensions of the world in which we live, especially the experiences of people of African descent.
7. General education should emphasize study in breadth and encourage students to explore the ways disciplined inquiry in the major can shed light on broader issues in their own lives and to render service to humanity.

**Components of the Program**

**The General Education Program at Delaware State University consists of a Core, Breadth Areas, Senior Capstone Experience, and Across-the-Curriculum (A-t-C) Learning Outcomes. These are described below.**

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**The Core**-- those courses that **all** students must complete because they are fundamental to all learning and basic to the mission of the University. The Core provides students with the knowledge and habits of mind that they will need in order to accomplish their academic goals in all major programs. A grade of ?C? or better is required in all Core courses.

| Core Course # | Core Course Name | Credits |
|---|---|---|
| xx-191 | University Seminar I | 1 |
| xx-192 | University Seminar II | 1 |
| 01-101 | English Composition I | 3 |
| 01-102 | English Composition II | 3 |
| 16-100 | Lifetime Fitness and Wellness | 2 |
| 01-200 | Speech | 3 |
| 31-395 | Global Societies (Students must have junior status) | 3 |

**Course Descriptions:**

**University Seminar: XX*-191, XX*-192 1:2:0, 1:1:0**
University Seminar is a two semester, general education course sequence designed to provide students with the essentials for a smooth transition to college life and academic success. Academic skills will be developed. These skills include critical reading, thinking, listening, writing, speaking, and using the library, the internet and word processing. Values clarification, coping with peer pressures and the impact of a

healthy lifestyle will be addressed. Opportunities will be provided for self-evaluation and growth in basic learning strategies as well as personal and career goals. Knowing the history of the University, feeling connected to the institution, and sharing a common educational experience with other freshmen are important goals of this course.
Students entering Delaware State University with sixty (60) credit hours or an associate degree do not have to take University Seminar. Some Departments may advise these students to take the course since they need the content of the departmental component of University Seminar. *A grade of ?C? or better is required.*
* XX is the primary number of the department in which the student is majoring. Undeclared majors take 02-191 and 02-192. ***No more than one (1) credit hour of University Seminar I and one (1) credit hour of University Seminar II can be used in the GPA and towards graduation. The department chair and/or the advisor will decide which of the courses will count towards graduation.***

**Global Societies 31-395** **3:3:0**
This course is designed to develop persons with educated and informed perspectives on the world for the twenty-first century. These are individuals who know their world, and who can understand facets of globalism which transcend time, space and place.
Factors to be considered include global geography, global themes of the past, the global marketplace, and global political, social and cultural developments. This will enable students to appreciate the past, comprehend the present, and be effective and knowledgeable global citizens for the future. *A grade of ?C? or better is required*. Students must have a minimum of 60 credit hours to register for Global Societies.

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**Breadth Areas** -- those categories of courses from which students must choose a designated number of credit hours that provide breadth and the well-roundedness of a liberal education in the arts, history, other humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. Minimum grade requirements for Breadth courses vary by major program. See curriculum sheet.

| Breadth Course # | Breadth Area | Minimum Credits |
|---|---|---|
| 34-xxx | History | 3 |
| 01-xxx | Literature | 3 |
| xx-xxx | Social Sciences | 3 |
| xx-xxx | Arts/Humanities | 6 |
| 25-xxx | Mathematics | 3 |
| xx-xxx | Natural Science with Laboratory | 3 |

**Please click on the link below for a list of the allowed courses for Breadth Areas.** ***It is important to note that each student and advisor must consult the curriculum and the Across-the-Curriculum plan for specific requirements of their program.***

**Click for Breadth Course List [5]**

**Senior Capstone Experience** -- is designed to integrate general education and the major program. This experience may take the form of senior seminar, internship, or student teaching with a seminar. The Capstone serves as the culmination of the student?s undergraduate education. In it a student demonstrates competence in the body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes inherent in a major program. It is also the setting in which the student shows an understanding of the breadth of knowledge and skills that a mastery of general education provides. It enables students to make "real world" connections to their discipline and to other disciplines as well. The Senior Capstone Experience brings general education and major programs of study together providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate their becoming "the educated person."

**Course Description for SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE--3 HOURS (Minimum)**
The senior capstone experience is a course in a major program designed to integrate general education and

the major course of study. It enables the student to demonstrate the following: 1) a competence in the major and 2) an understanding of the breadth of knowledge, skills, and sensibilities that general education provides. The course may be planned and/or implemented in an interdisciplinary manner.

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**Across the Curriculum (A-t-C)** ? learning outcomes which students must demonstrate through various assessments. If graduates from Delaware State University?s undergraduate programs are to become effective communicators, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers in the world's pluralistic and global societies, then some critical concepts should infuse the general education program and major curricula. These Across-the-curriculum outcomes should be linked with research and professional development that lead to the most effective instructional strategies, course activities, and assessments of student learning and program effectiveness.

The Across-the Curriculum concepts that are integrated throughout the general education program and major curricula, and which produce the desirable learning outcomes in students are the following: (1) Reading, Speaking, and Listening Across-the-Curriculum (RSL); (2) Self-Evaluation; (3) Wellness; (4) Information Literacy; (5) Computer Competency; (6) Writing in the Major (Outside the Capstone); (7) Quantitative Reasoning; (8) African-American Experience (9) Multiculturalism; (10) Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving; and (11) Global Issues.

Since these areas are integrated throughout the curriculum, there will be overlaps between some breadth courses, major courses, and across the curriculum requirements.

**1. Reading, Speaking, Listening**

College graduates should be able to communicate effectively. Students should be able to do the following: comprehend, analyze, interpret and evaluate various texts; write and speak effectively and correctly; listen actively to what instructors and peers are saying. Communicating effectively is not the exclusive domain of the English Department. It is the responsibility of all instructors to inculcate effective communication skills throughout the general education and major curriculum.

**2. Self-evaluation**

In order to become productive and contributing citizens, students must have a critical self-understanding. Active engagement of students in their education is important. This creates a sense of relevance. Students can also develop an internal locus of control and other mature ways of thinking. Self-evaluation is evident in curricular and co-curricular activities, journal reflections and course activities that encourage students to examine their ethics, core beliefs/values, communication and leadership skills, strengths, weaknesses, likes/dislikes, etc. Students can then be prepared to make choices in majors, minors, career aspirations and important life decisions.

**3. Wellness**

To be able to think clearly, develop effective study skills, and be prepared for careers and life-long learning, students must demonstrate an understanding of the principles involved in wellness. They should be able to share these principles with family members, friends, and associates. The wellness component aims to address issues involved in nutrition, well-being, social adjustment, and psychological and physical health.

**4. Information Literacy**

In order to be successful in this information age, all graduates should have knowledge/experience in the process of information acquisition. This includes researching library databases, understanding and performing scholarly searches, completing citations, evaluating information for relevance/reliability, and compiling information for a unified purpose. Information literacy must be incorporated in general education courses as well as major courses to demonstrate field-specific applications.

**5. Computer Competency**

To the greatest extent possible and wherever practical, computer and information technologies should be

integrated into general education courses and generally throughout the curriculum. College graduates should be able to do the following: (a) use computers and other technology (b) access and manipulate spreadsheets and databases; (c) use printed and computerized resources to locate information; and (d) use and prepare multimedia applications. Students needing formal instruction in this area should takes courses such as Applying Computers (20-101) and Microcomputer Applications (52-105). These and other program specific courses provide students with opportunities to analyze the efficient utilization of computers to enhance productivity at all levels of organization, from office personnel to executive management. Students examine and utilize the different types of hardware, software, operating systems, multimedia, the Internet, Web page design, etc.

**6. Writing in the Major**

College graduates should be able to write coherent essays, reports, thesis papers, using the standard form of the English language that is relatively free from grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors. To build on the foundational English composition skills, students will be required to apply these writing skills in their field of study as well as across the general education program.

**7. Quantitative Reasoning**

This competency may be met by courses or modules in the major or by a second mathematics course. Some examples of quantitative reasoning include:

- Mathematical analysis, computations, charting, graphing, algebraic problem solving,
- Numerical analysis, numerical relationships, patterns, estimation measurement
- Quantitative problem solving or real-world problem solving
- Data analysis, data interpretation, statistical analysis
- Logical thinking and steps to construct feasible solutions to various problems.

The specific methods of quantitative analysis will vary by program.

**8. African-American Experience**

Delaware State University?s legacy as a historically black college enables it to provide students with the opportunity to understand African-American perspectives in history, liberal arts, and society. Courses such as African American Experience, African American Art History, African American Literature, African American Music and other major courses provide exposure to the African American viewpoints in American society. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roots of slavery and resulting African-American experiences, as well as an appreciation of the contributions of African-Americans.

**9. Multiculturalism**

College graduates must understand how to develop and manage human relationships by being able to identify and adapt to the needs, values, expectations, and sensibilities of others. Students must be able to do the following: (a) understand and consider diverse points of view; (b) determine what is appropriate in a given situation given the norms of groups and cultures which provide guidance for acceptable language and behavior; (c) be open-minded about and inclusive of other cultures; and (d) understand different points of view based on gender, ethnicity, race, or national origin.

**10. Critical thinking / Problem-solving**

College graduates should be able to move beyond the mere conveying or restating of other's facts and ideas. Students should be able to do the following: (a) reflect upon, question, analyze, and evaluate information; (b) assess bias, narrowness and contradictions; (c) formulate hypotheses and alternatives; (d) evaluate an argument in terms of reasoning and applicability; (e) determine how new data may lead to confirmation or questioning of conclusions; (f) make inferences, comparisons, formulate frameworks or categories, classify data, and translate information from one medium to another; and (g) analyze and evaluate their own arguments and those of others in order to confirm or deny the accuracy, validity, and reliability of their own reasoning and of the various sources of information they hear or read.
Students should also be able to conduct disciplined inquiry and be able to do the following: (a) determine the nature of a problem; (b) analyze the problem and determine possible solutions; (c) assess the advantages and disadvantages of each possible solution; (d) determine the most effective and efficient of the optional solutions; and (e) execute the solution. Being able to think critically and solve problems is one of the hallmarks of becoming an educated person.

**11. Global Issues**
College graduates should understand that their world is no longer circumscribed by the boundaries of nations and continents. The world is a global community and students should understand and appreciate the pluralism of this global community. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of various political and economic systems, and the positive and negative aspects of globalization.

**Across-the-Curriculum (A-t-C) learning outcomes of general education -- should infuse as many other courses as possible. These outcomes connect general education courses to each other and to the majors. The following page outlines some generic guidelines for meeting Across-the-Curriculum outcomes. It is important to note that each student and advisor must consult the curriculum and the Across-the-Curriculum plan for specific requirements of their program.**

Click for Across the Curriculum (A-t-C) List [8]:

**(Please note: This list is a general guide. Students and Advisors must consult the individual program Across-the-Curriculum Plan for additional course requirements or options.)**

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