

# Basic Elements of the General Education Program at Ferris State University

**History:** As summarized from General Education Academic Program Review report, 2008.

**1993:** Began implementation of current program (with minor changes since) following several years of study by a general education task force and recommendations to the Academic Senate. Implementation was concurrent with conversion from quarter to semester system.

**1995:** NCA site visit found inadequacies in several areas, including: (also see APR report for other concerns):

1. lack of a philosophy statement,
2. inadequate administrative structure,
3. lack of assessment,
4. lack of criteria for selecting courses,
5. lack of “campus-wide acceptance of the centrality of general education in all academic programs”.

**1998:** NCA focused site visit found significant enough improvement, however still “no general support for [general education] centrality” and recommendations included:

1. need for better explanation to students about the purpose of general education,
2. need for gen ed outcomes on gen ed course syllabi,
3. need for better training of advisors on gen ed requirements
4. need for review of REG courses to determine how much of course work is actually focused on REG.
  - a. REG criteria were developed that required 75% of course to be REG content
  - b. Approved by Academic Senate, but with concerns that this would decertify many courses and make it difficult for students fulfill the requirement.
  - c. VPAA froze REG by allowing existing courses to continue to count while new courses would meet the new criteria. This continues as the present situation.

**2001:** NCA focused site visit substantiated many positive aspects of program; still some concerns, in particular:

“...continues to be inconsistency in administration and expectation across departments, particularly in regards to rigorous application of stated criteria for GE courses.” Efforts to address this included:

- a. employing UGEC as final arbiter of the curriculum,
- b. educating offering departments about course criteria to employ when requesting gen ed status
- c. consistent use of course criteria by gen ed committees reviewing course proposals

**2002:** Academic Senate formed a committee to review gen ed. Committee submitted a report in July 2003 with recommendations for changes in gen ed outcomes and credit allocation. However,

“This committee was not formed by both the Senate and the VPAA together and so did not meet the conditions established by the approved general education procedures for recommending changes to the general education outcomes or the credit allocation.” (Gen Ed APR report, 2008)

After review of the senate report by the VPAA:

1. Social Awareness requirement was changed to require a 200 level course rather than 300 level, and
2. a freeze was placed on any changes to general education until a later date, preferably following a program review process.

**2008:** General Education Program undergoes an Academic Program Review. Resulting report submitted with recommendations to Academic Program Review Council in Summer 2008; report with recommendations approved by Academic Senate in November 2008.

## **Philosophy (current program):**

Ferris State University is dedicated to the ideal of blending career-oriented professional and technical education with a solid base of general education. Our general education program provides students with the academic skills, analytic ability, and general knowledge necessary to flexibly meet the challenges of their personal, civic, and professional lives. General education at Ferris accomplishes the following:

1. It enhances and enriches the skills essential to students' success in every field and most areas of their lives.
2. It provides students with the knowledge that will allow them to adapt to change, advance in their careers, and act as informed citizens.
3. It assists students in gaining a better understanding of themselves. It also widens the horizons of their experience by offering them a better understanding and appreciation of some of the best of human achievement.

## **Philosophy: (newly revised):**

General Education at Ferris State University challenges students to be successful citizens of a diverse and globalized world.

**Outcome Areas:** Student learning outcomes and course criteria for each area can be found on the General Education website (<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/gened.html>).

### Limited student choice

**Communication Competence (Writing and Speech)** 13 courses

There are also 37 Writing Intensive Courses (WIC) that can help meet the upper level writing requirement.

**Quantitative Skills** MATH 115 or higher

Many student choices for courses (though often limited by program requirements)

**Cultural Enrichment** 180 courses

**Scientific Understanding** 91 courses

**Social Awareness** 74 courses

**Global Consciousness** 86 courses, all but 7 are 2fers or 3 fers

**REG** 71 courses, all are 2fers or 3fers

*NOTE: 2fers and 3fers are CE or SA courses that also satisfy REG and/or GC courses.*

*4 CE courses are 3fers (GC+REG), 55 are GC 2fers and 19 are REG 2fers*

*10 SA courses are 3fers(GC+REG), 10 are GC 2fers and 38 are REG 2fers*

No courses, spread across curriculum (majors, gen ed) and co-curriculum (Student Affairs)

**Life-Long Learning** (outcomes described in Academic Program Review Report but not on website)

Includes: reasoning ability, library/information skills, project organizational skills, collaborative skills, and computer competence.

**Total separate courses in program, approximately 381.** This does not include experimental \_90 courses, many of which are Study Away courses.

**All courses spread across 4 colleges** (CAS, CET, COB, CEHS) and 17 departments (Architecture, Printing, Surveying, Economics, International Business, Management, Marketing, Criminal Justice, HVAC, Manufacturing, TV Production, all 6 CAS departments).

**Accounts for a third of Bachelor's degree requirements.**

**Produces about 5 million dollars per year** in profit for the university (APR report, 2008).

**Requirements by Degree:** See website for more detail.

BS/BA/BAS/BIS/BSW: 34 to 48 cr hrs with **41** cr hrs as probably most common (ie 1/3 of degree)

CC: (9 cr hr writing; 3 cr hr speech)	9 or <b>12</b>	cr hrs (9 if take 3 WIC courses in major; rare)
QS: MATH 115 or higher; or equivalent	0, <b>3</b> , or 7	cr hrs (0 if equivalency; 7 if prereq needed)
CE:	<b>9</b>	cr hrs
SU:	7( <b>8</b> )	cr hrs (most are 4 cr hr courses)
SA:	<b>9</b>	cr hrs
GC: one course	<b>0-3</b>	cr hrs (0 if a 2fer or 3fer...ie all but 3 courses)
REG: one course	<b>0</b>	cr hrs (all REG are 2fers or 3fers)

AA/AS: 34 to 38 cr hrs with **39** cr hrs probably most common

CC: (6 cr hr writing; 3 cr hr speech)	<b>9</b>	cr hrs
QS: MATH 110 or higher; or equivalent	0- <b>4</b>	cr hrs
CE:	<b>9</b>	cr hrs
SU:	7( <b>8</b> )	cr hrs (most are 4 cr hr courses)
SA:	<b>9</b>	cr hrs

AAS: 15 to 18 cr hrs with **19** cr hrs probably most common

CC:	<b>6</b>	cr hrs in writing only
QS: MATH 110 or higher; or equivalent	0- <b>4</b>	cr hrs
CE:	<b>3</b>	cr hrs
SU:	<b>3</b>	cr hrs
SA:	<b>3</b>	cr hrs

**Assessment :** Also see the website and APR report.

External, nationally normed: Provides Pre/Post data plus comparison to Peer Institutions.

Academic Profiles (Now MAPP = Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress)

National Survey of Student Engagement

Internal: Produced by departmental or outcome area committees

Writing: pre/post with rubrics

CE: survey

SA: test

SU: test

REG: survey

GC: survey

LLL: survey

TracDat: AP and NSSE data are entered as well as internal assessments for writing, cultural enrichment, and social awareness. Entry of other available assessment data is ongoing.

**Administrative Structure:** Also see the website and APR report.

VPAA: Has overall responsibility for the program.

UGEC: Chaired by Gen Ed Coordinator with one rep from: each college + academic counselors group + Assoc. VPAA as nonvoting member

Coordinator Responsibilities

Contact person for Gen Ed questions from all sectors

Shepherds new proposals through the approval process

Works with outcome area subcommittees on assessment/course approval

Drafts policy/procedure documents

Meets and works with individuals or groups about questions, issues, concerns

UGEC Responsibilities

Final approval or removal of gen ed status for courses

Set policy/procedure

Oversight of outcome area subcommittees

Mediate conflicts

Outcome Area Subcommittees: Assessment and Course Approval

**Policies and Procedures:** There is policy/procedure written and approved for each of the following items.

1. Procedure for making changes in General Education
2. Approval process for new courses seeking Gen Ed status
3. General Education Transfer Equivalency Determinations
4. Removing Gen Ed status from a course (APRC recommendation)
5. Appealing the rejection of Gen Ed status by an outcome area subcommittee (APRC recommendation)
6. Materials to submit for new courses seeking Gen Ed status (General Education Course Criteria Form)

### **Website:**

The FSU General Education website includes more detail about the program as well as specific courses that satisfy requirements for the different outcome areas.

Accessible via: <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/academics/gened/gened.html>

or Ferris Homepage; Academics Home (or Academic Affairs); General Education