General Education Revision: Draft Proposal

WHAT IS THIS?

This is a draft version of a proposal for a new General Education program that will be presented to the UNCG Faculty Senate on March 1, 2019.

The proposal is based on feedback from the UNCG community during Fall 2018, and fuses popular elements from multiple candidate models presented.

It also incorporates best practices in general education as described in the literature and implemented by our peer institutions.

Goal: Develop seven core competencies, cutting across disciplines and professions, and integrating multiple subjects and levels – including upper-level major-specific courses.

The Competencies

- C1: Written Communication
- C2: Oral Communication
- C3: Quantitative Reasoning
- C4: Critical & Creative Thinking
- C5: Information Literacy
- C6: Intercultural Knowledge & Engagement
- C7: Diversity & Equity

Students encounter the competencies repeatedly, in three different settings:

1. Foundational Courses
   - to build skills for academic success
   - 4 courses (11 student credit hours)
   - taken within first 45 or 60 hours at UNCG
   - Thematic Seminar (2 hours) – C5
     - during first year; small sections, varied topical themes
   - Written Communication (3 hours) – C1+C4
   - Oral Communication (3 hours) – C2+C4
   - Math/Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours) – C3

Disciplinary areas are defined broadly to allow many departments to contribute.

A disciplinary course must address two or three of the seven competencies to qualify for General Education credit.

2. Disciplinary Area Courses
   - for breadth of perspective
   - 8 courses (25 student credit hours)
   - Social/Behavioral Science (6 hours)
   - Humanities (9 hours)
     - including Arts
   - Natural Science (7 hours)
     - including one lab course
   - Health & Wellness (3 hours)
     - broadly defined, e.g., physical, emotional, financial

Credit hour total: 36

3. Requirements in the Major
   - to connect General Education with the discipline
   - no specific course or credit hour requirements
   - Departments must address competencies within the major, in ways appropriate and authentic to the discipline.
   - For example, could require a “writing in the major” course, or integrate writing competency development into multiple other courses.

Students do not need to track or check off competencies. Taking the specified foundational, disciplinary, and major courses ensures adequate exposure.

→ Exception: Students must ensure that they take at least one C6, one C7, and one additional C1 course beyond what is guaranteed by the Foundational Courses.

For definitions of the competencies and disciplinary areas, more details about this General Education revision proposal and the overall revision process, see: https://provost.unCG.edu/resources/generated/
Working Draft: General Education Plan (subject to revision)
General Education Revision Task Force, February 2019

The proposed General Education Plan is competency based. All Gen Ed courses must address two or three of the following seven Competencies. Working drafts of the Competencies and other additional information are provided in a separate document. SLOs for each Competency would be developed later by appropriate groups of faculty.

C1. Written Communication  
C2. Oral Communication  
C3. Quantitative Reasoning  
C4. Critical and Creative Thinking  
C5. Information Literacy  
C6. Intercultural Knowledge and Engagement  
C7. Diversity and Equity

Rationale for organizing the General Education around Competencies: 1) Current best practices in delivering General Education; 2) Will help us better explain the purpose of the General Education Program to students; 3) This approach received a positive response from faculty in the Fall 2018 discussions.

Students must complete at least one course with each of the Competencies and two courses with the Written Communication Competency. Five of the Competencies (C1-C5) are covered in the Foundational Courses. The other two (C6, C7) and the second Written Communication course could be covered in either the Foundational Courses or the Disciplinary Area Courses.

Assessment of the General Education program will be based on these seven Competencies.

Course Requirements — While the General Education Program is organized around the Competencies, the Course Requirements are the context in which the Competencies will be delivered. Competencies will be associated with individual courses (not instructors).

Foundational Courses - Foundational courses emphasize skills and knowledge that are built upon in further General Education courses and in the major. The Thematic Seminar should be taken within the first year at UNCG. The other three Foundational Courses should be taken early in a student’s career, perhaps the first 45 or 60 hours. For 1 and 4 below, the second Competency can come from any of the others in the list of seven.

1. Thematic Seminar (2 hours) – C5  
2. Written Communication (3 hours) – C1, C4  
3. Oral Communication (3 hours) – C2, C4  
4. Math/Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours) – C3

Disciplinary Area Courses - Courses in the disciplinary areas introduce methods of study and knowledge bases in a broad range of fields to provide a liberal education that encourages lifelong learning.

1. Social/Behavioral (6 hours): Courses must be from different disciplines  
2. Humanities (9 hours): Courses must be from three different disciplines  
3. Natural Science (7 hours): Courses must be from different disciplines; one course with lab  
4. Health/Wellness (3 hours)

Total hours: 36

Integration with the major — Majors are required to address the Competencies in ways appropriate to their programs. Each department would formulate an appropriate set of requirements or expectations based on the Competencies.

(See “Supplement to Working Draft” for further information about Competencies and Disciplinary Areas.)