

General Education Committee

Charge

The General Education Committee considers new courses for inclusion as general education and approved transfer elective courses and performs periodic reviews of these courses are continuing to satisfy required core competencies and transfer suitability.

Membership

The General Education Committee will report to the Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (“Executive Vice President”). Elected representation on the GEC will be drawn primarily from college-wide faculty reflecting the general education competencies. A library representative, two academic deans, an at-large adjunct faculty member, and an academic counselor will be elected college-wide by their peers. The Curriculum Committee and the Instruction Committee will appoint one member respectively to serve as a representative on the GEC. The Director of General Education Assessment and Transfer Partnerships will serve on the committee.

Each member shall serve a two-year term, with 1/3 overlap from year to year. An additional one-year term may be served, if the member desires, by signifying his or her willingness to do so annually after their first term during the membership drive. A total of three years can be served consecutively. If a member should step down from the committee prior to the end of his or her term, a replacement for the same General Education competency shall be appointed by the Committee chair to serve out the remainder of the term. At the end of the term, the replacement will be eligible for election to serve a subsequent two-year term. Each member of the committee must be employed by TCC while serving on the Committee.

Evaluating Courses for Inclusion/Continued Inclusion as General Education Courses

Courses that may qualify for inclusion as general education courses include:

- new courses proposed for inclusion in the college curriculum;
- courses that are already a part of the college curriculum but are not currently identified as general education courses; and
- courses that have already been identified as general education courses and are in need of periodic reaffirmation.

To be included as a general education course, a course must meet the following criteria:

1. Clearly meet the learning outcomes of one or more of the general education competencies.
2. Include an authentic assignment or selection of authentic assignments that all faculty will require of their students that allow for the development and assessment of student learning in one or more of the selected general education competencies.
3. Provide students with an introduction to an academic discipline or a primary subdivision of that discipline.
4. Be open to all students satisfying the appropriate prerequisites and serve significant numbers of students from different academic programs.
5. Have support from full-time faculty who agree to use an authentic assignment developed by faculty (or a selection of authentic assignments from options developed by faculty) and participate in general education assessment activities (e.g., authentic assignments, submission of students’ work, review of findings, recommend and implement curriculum modifications based on findings).
6. Serve as an appropriate general education requirement in one of the following areas: Communication, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities/Fine Arts, or Social/Behavioral Sciences.
7. Be general in nature and not “...narrowly focused on those skills, techniques, and procedures peculiar to a particular occupation or profession.”

8. Count as a general education course at a majority of TCC's top five public four-year transfer institutions.

General Education Course Approval Workflow

Faculty seeking approval to have a course considered as a general education course must follow the process below.

1. The faculty member(s) generates the general education course proposal to include the General Education Course Proposal Form, Criteria Response, Standard Assignment, Course Outline (available in i-INCURR) and Syllabus from faculty proposing the course. As part of the proposal creation, the faculty member will be expected to:
 - a. seek input from full-time faculty members at all campuses where the course is being taught (or proposed to be taught);
 - b. work closely with the department chair and/or academic dean, as appropriate; and
 - c. determine the transferability of the course. If not a course that typically transfers, this may include contacting four-year institutions and determining their willingness to accept the course for transfer.
2. Once complete, the proposal is submitted to the department chair, if applicable, for review and approval.
3. The proposal is submitted to the Academic Dean(s) for approval.
4. The proposal is submitted to the Associate Vice President (AVP) for Academic Affairs for review.
5. The academic dean/faculty member will present the proposal to the General Education Committee.
6. The GEC's recommendation with supporting documentation is submitted to the Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for review and a final decision.

Core Competencies Defined

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and Tidewater Community College (TCC) have defined the general education core competencies that all graduates from associate degree programs should attain upon degree completion. Any course being considered for inclusion as a general education course must fully support at least one of these competencies.

1. Communication – A competent communicator can interact with others using all forms of communication, resulting in understanding and being understood. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to understand and interpret complex materials; assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally; use standard English; use appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions; use listening skills; and recognize the role of culture in communication.
2. Critical Thinking – A competent critical thinker evaluates evidence carefully and applies reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to discriminate among degrees of credibility, accuracy, and reliability of inferences drawn from given data; recognize parallels, assumptions, or presuppositions in any given source of information; evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue; weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted; determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided; and use problem solving skills.
3. Cultural and Social Understanding – A culturally and socially competent person possesses an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the social and cultural dimensions within and across local, regional, state, national, and global communities. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to assess the impact that social institutions have on individuals and culture—past, present, and future; describe their own as well as others' personal ethical systems and values within social institutions; recognize the impact that arts and humanities have upon individuals and cultures; recognize

the role of language in social and cultural contexts; and recognize the interdependence of distinctive world-wide social, economic, geo-political, and cultural systems.

4. Information Literacy – A person who is competent in information literacy recognizes when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to determine the nature and extent of information needed; access needed information effectively and efficiently; evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base; use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group, to accomplish a specific purpose; and understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.
5. Personal Development – An individual engaged in personal development strives for physical well-being and emotional maturity. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to develop and/or refine personal wellness goals; and develop and/or enhance the knowledge, skills and understanding to make informed academic, social personal, career, and interpersonal decisions.
6. Quantitative Reasoning – A person who is competent in quantitative reasoning possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to apply the use of logic, numbers, and mathematics to deal effectively with common problems and issues. A person who is quantitatively literate can use numerical, geometric, and measurement data and concepts, mathematical skills, and principles of mathematical reasoning to draw logical conclusions and to make well-reasoned decisions. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to use logical and mathematical reasoning with the context of various disciplines; interpret and use mathematical formulas; interpret mathematical models such as graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences from them; use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data; estimate and consider answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness; and represent mathematical information numerically, symbolically, and visually using graphs and charts.
7. Scientific Reasoning – A person who is competent in scientific reasoning adheres to a self-correcting system of inquiry (the scientific method) and relies on empirical evidence to describe, understand, predict, and control natural phenomena. TCC graduates will demonstrate the ability to generate an empirically evidenced and logical argument; distinguish a scientific argument from a non-scientific argument; reason by deduction, induction and analogy; distinguish between causal and correlational relationships; and recognize methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge.

General Education Requirement

VCCS policy requires students to complete minimum general education requirements for all associate degree programs in the following areas (see VCCS Table 5-1B for specific credit requirements). Courses being considered for inclusion as an approved general education course must represent one of these requirements.

1. Communication
2. Mathematics
3. Humanities/Fine Arts
4. Natural Sciences
5. Social/Behavioral Sciences

Evaluating Courses for Continued Inclusion as a General Education Course

Annually, a portion of the courses considered to satisfy general education requirements will be reviewed by the General Education Committee such that all general education courses will be reviewed over a two-year period per the following rotating schedule:

General Education Area	Review Semester
Social Sciences	Fall (even years)
Natural Sciences and Mathematics	Spring (even years)
Humanities	Fall (odd years)
Communication	Spring (odd years)

Additional review of general education courses will be initiated by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (or appointee).

The General Education Committee shall examine each course with the following questions in mind:

- **NEED.** Why is this course needed or appropriate as a general education course?
- **AUDIENCE.** Who is the intended audience for this course? Will this course serve a breadth of students?
- **CORE COMPETENCY.** Which of the core competencies does this course support? In what ways is the competency supported?
- **GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT.** Which of the five general education requirements does this course satisfy?
- **AUTHENTIC ASSIGNMENT.** What authentic assignments are in place for this class and how do these assignments support the core competency? To what extent are faculty using authentic assignments?
- **ASSESSMENT.** How does the course assess students' progress towards the core competency? To what extent are results being used by faculty to improve student learning in a core competency?
- **SCHEDULING.** How often and where is this course offered (# of sections per semester, campus)? Is the course being offered regularly and at a variety of days and times? What has the enrollment been in the course for the past two academic years?
- **TRANSFERABILITY.** How does the course transfer to four-year institutions?

Outcomes of the General Education Committee may include:

- approved inclusion/continued inclusion of the course as a general education offering;
- approved inclusion/continued inclusion of the course as a general education offering but subject to review in a subsequent semester;
- disapproval/removal of the course as a general education offering; or
- disapproval/removal of the course as a general education offering with a recommendation for inclusion as a transfer elective.

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