

PROPOSAL

IDEAs in Action

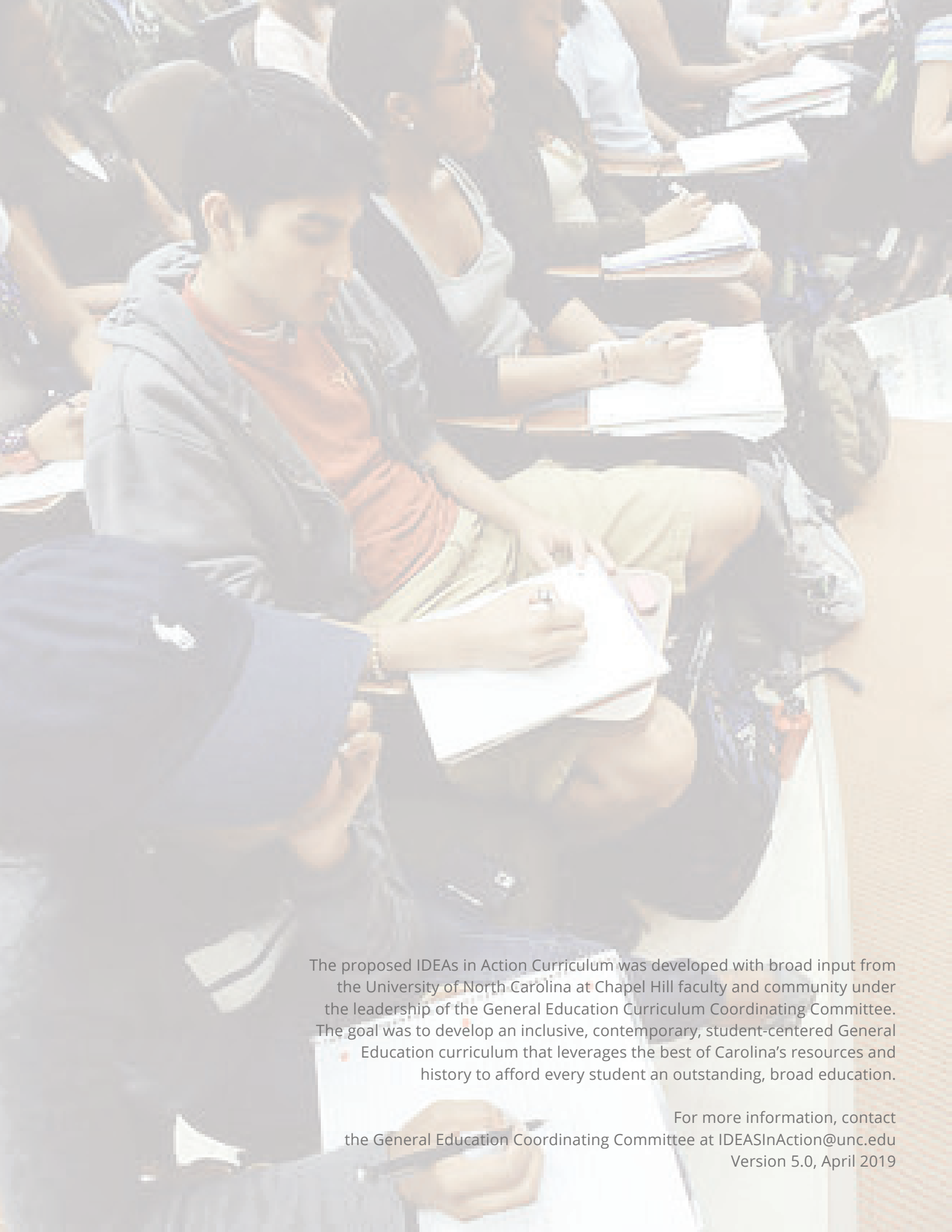
CURRICULUM

General Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



UNC

COLLEGE OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES



The proposed IDEAs in Action Curriculum was developed with broad input from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill faculty and community under the leadership of the General Education Curriculum Coordinating Committee. The goal was to develop an inclusive, contemporary, student-centered General Education curriculum that leverages the best of Carolina's resources and history to afford every student an outstanding, broad education.

For more information, contact the General Education Coordinating Committee at IDEASInAction@unc.edu
Version 5.0, April 2019

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THE GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND THE VALUE OF CAPACITIES

The IDEAs in Action Curriculum brings Carolina's faculty and resources to the task of preparing graduates to become lifelong learners, approaching the world with curiosity and open minds. This ambition requires a general education curriculum that instills in its graduates the tendency and ability to apply creativity, care, reflection, and evidence-based inquiry to the problems and issues they encounter as they serve the public as productive employees, entrepreneurs, citizens, and leaders in a rapidly changing world.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate should be able to think critically, define and frame questions, work collaboratively, solve problems, make reasoned judgments based upon facts and evidence, respond creatively to changing and uncertain situations, take risks, and be resilient. A Carolina graduate should also be able to communicate these judgments persuasively and effectively to a variety of audiences, as well as listen carefully and thoughtfully to the concerns and ideas of others.

Educational experiences should promote equity among students. Most students arrive without full knowledge of what the university offers, the questions and ideas under discussion, and the opportunities in the array of disciplines. In the years since UNC-Chapel Hill introduced its previous general education curriculum, the share of low-income students in the incoming class has nearly doubled (from 12% to 21%), and the rate of first-generation college students also increased, amplifying the urgency of supporting the transition to college for all students. In response, we aim to guide students through clear pathways for navigating the research university, better promote persistence, address disparities in academic preparation, and provide opportunities for success.

Additionally, students should carry forward the abilities they develop at Carolina throughout their lifetimes and adapt them to contexts beyond the university. The same broad intellectual goals behind their college education should apply to students' post-college roles as citizens, leaders, family members, and lifelong learners. In each of these domains, graduates can bring to bear such capacities as identifying and understanding problems; submitting these problems to evidence, critique, and dialogue; forming good judgments, even in the context of uncertainty; and acting upon those judgments.

Further, students should apply their education to acting in the world. Their education should prepare them to engage with the world to solve problems and promote the ideals of flexibility of thought, sophistication, humility, communication, and innovation. Students today inhabit an interconnected public sphere that is dramatically different from the one their counterparts faced even a decade ago. In addition to critically

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responding to a world in which distinctions among arguments, beliefs, emotions, opinions, principles, and knowledge are becoming less clear, students should be prepared to participate fully in—and help to shape—this public sphere.

The key to preparing students to be effective, successful thinkers and citizens is developing flexible *capacities* that are useful in many areas.¹ Beyond particular skills, which are adapted to specific contexts, capacities as we conceptualize them are flexible and adaptable modes of thought and action that can be used in different contexts, including new contexts that will emerge in the future.

The capacities model allows educators to identify traits and approaches they hope to cultivate among students. Further, thinking in terms of capacities prompts educators to articulate outcomes that will situate learning activities in concrete contexts with clear aims. Courses promoting those capacities will help students learn to identify, discover, evaluate, and act, even as they cultivate context-specific outcomes and engage students with a range of subjects.

A second key aspect of capacities is their portability: their potential for transfer to other areas of investigation and action.² To maximize portability and demonstrate flexibility, each capacity should be encountered several times in different contexts.³ A curriculum should help students develop capacities that can be usefully applied in a range of fields or situations. Having developed the capacity for communicating across different ways of knowing in a course focusing on gender, for example, students might transfer that capacity into other domains—say, a public forum on women’s health concerns, where communication across different contexts would be crucial.

¹ As the AAAS “Future of Higher Education” report details, it is precisely these intellectual styles of thought that the liberal arts can teach and exemplify. The challenge is to fulfill that potential. Several theoretical strains use the concept of “capacities” in this area. In her work on one of these strains, Martha Nussbaum uses the concept of capacities to refer to human abilities cultivated through education and useful in many domains beyond the academy. (Nussbaum, Martha. *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* [updated ed.] Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.)

² Guthrie, Kathy L., and Kathleen Callahan. “Liberal arts: Leadership education in the 21st century.” *New Directions for Higher Education* 2016.174 (2016): 21-33.

³ *It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates, 2013. https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf

IDEAS IN ACTION

The IDEAs in Action curriculum is designed so students encounter key capacities several times and at varying levels of depth and complexity throughout their general education, each time in a different intellectual context to ensure breadth. It is flexible, allowing students the opportunity to mold their own educational pathways, while also requiring that they encounter new and challenging ideas. And it includes many opportunities for students to learn using high-impact practices—educational practices that have been shown to contribute to students’ overall learning and success and improve persistence.⁴

The curriculum asks students to:

- **Identify** pressing questions, problems, and issues.
- **Discover** new ideas, evidence, and approaches to these matters.
- **Evaluate** these ideas, evidence, and approaches, coming to sound judgments, even under uncertainty.
- **Act** appropriately based on that evaluation and judgment.

To complete the degree, students must also complete:

- Requirements for a major.
- For bachelor of arts degree candidates, supplemental education consisting of a second major, a minor, or three advanced-level courses (nine credits) in a department outside the major.
- At least 120 credits.

The curriculum also identifies a set of focus capacities, key courses, and experiences that students will pursue in their studies.

The curriculum begins with **First Year Foundations**, a set of special courses and experiences designed to help students navigate their transition to the college environment, get ready to take ownership of their education, and make the most of the opportunities at Carolina and beyond. The curriculum proceeds through all four years of the student’s education with the help of **Focus Capacity** courses, nine types of courses that convey key capacities for students through liberal arts and sciences content, bringing depth, breadth, and recurring capacities to students’ general education. And it incorporates flexible curricular and extracurricular experiences and tools to complement and build upon these courses to foster **Reflection and Integration**.

⁴ Kuh, George D. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008; Kuh, George D., and Ken O’Donnell. *Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013.

The IDEAs Approach

Identify pressing questions, problems, and issues.

Discover new ideas, evidence, and approaches to these matters.

Evaluate these ideas, evidence, and approaches, coming to sound judgements even under uncertainty.

Act appropriately based on that evaluation and judgement.

FIRST YEAR FOUNDATIONS

In their first year, students learn about new areas and develop foundational capacities they will use throughout their college careers and beyond. Preserving flexibility for students to meet other general education, major, and elective goals, the first year requires four types of learning experiences: a first-year seminar (or alternative), a writing intensive course, an interdisciplinary course, called Ideas, Information and Inquiry (III), and a College Thriving course that helps them design and manage their education. These courses also offer initial engagement with the campus e-portfolio—a platform and set of resources for helping students archive, reflect on, and share their work.

First-Year Seminar or First-Year Launch

As students acclimate to a large university, a small class led by a full-time faculty member can link them with others who share similar interests. This helps students establish personal connections: an important part of college learning.⁵ First-year students must take a First-Year Seminar (which is strongly encouraged) or, alternatively, a First-Year Launch course. First-Year Seminars (FYS) provide students with this close contact through in-depth study of a specialized topic in a small class (no more than 24 students). First-Year Launch (FYL) courses provide a similar experience through a small (no more than 35 students), faculty-led version of an introductory course.

First-Year Seminar

FYSs are small (maximum 24 students) courses that focus substantially on research and systematic inquiry as practiced by the faculty member(s) and/or disciplines of which they are a part. An early college experience with a deep dive into a disciplinary question, the FYS complements the slate of introductory surveys many students sign up for. FYSs are issue-oriented, covering a wide range of knowledge and/or engaging specific issues or advanced, cutting-edge topics. They are methodologically self-conscious, focus on how scholars pose problems, involve active learning, encourage self-directed inquiry, and enable students to take responsibility for producing knowledge. The courses also build students' communication skills. They are not introductory surveys.

FYS instructors are encouraged to use the e-portfolio system to facilitate students' reflecting and connecting between courses and experiences. FYSs may fulfill a Focus Capacity. FYSs must be open to traditional first-year students; at the discretion of the

⁵ Skipper, Tracy L. (ed). *What Makes the First-Year Seminar High Impact?* Research Reports on College Transitions, No. 7. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First Year Experience & Students in Transition. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573737.pdf>

First Year
Foundations

First-Year Seminar
or First-Year
Launch

Writing at
the Research
University

Ideas, Information,
and Inquiry

College Thriving

Global Language

instructor, they may also be open to transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. They are not open to students who have already completed their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. FYSs that fulfill the requirements of a Focus Capacity (see below) may count for that Focus Capacity. The FYS must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
2. Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
3. Analyze and communicate issues associated with a specific, advanced topic, covering a wide range of knowledge.
4. Produce knowledge through self-directed inquiry and active learning.

First Year Launch

Students may take a FYL course instead of an FYS. These courses provide an introduction to a discipline or field of study that directly relates to a major offered at UNC-Chapel Hill. Thus, FYL courses must fulfill a requirement in a major (e.g., gateway, core requirement, or elective requirement). These courses also build students' communication skills. FYL courses are ordinarily capped at 24 but may have as many as 35 students. They are taught by full-time faculty members. FYLs that fulfill the requirements of a Focus Capacity may count for that Focus Capacity.

FYLs are only open to traditional first-year students, transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill, or a combination. Students are eligible to take an FYL course in the summer before and the summer after their first-year at Carolina. FYLs must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
2. Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
3. Apply methods for how scholars pose problems, discover solutions, resolve controversies, and evaluate knowledge.
4. Analyze and communicate issues associated with a broad, introductory topic covering a wide range of knowledge.

Writing at the Research University

All students must take English 105, a multiple-genre writing course. English 105 will be administered through the English and Comparative Literature department. Instructors emphasize research-based writing in disciplines across the University to match the breadth of first-year and later academic experiences. Students learn to write, and in the effort, to study, reason, instruct, provoke, persuade, anticipate, and entertain. The effort prepares them for the work ahead at Carolina and beyond. ENGL 105 courses

also engage students with the campus e-portfolio. It must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Employ conventions, genres, and rhetoric practiced in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.
2. Conduct research using a variety of methods, databases, and sources.
3. Discuss and present research-based arguments and information.
4. Identify how best to use research and evidence in discipline-specific compositions.
5. Compose using written, oral, and multimedia modes.
6. Review and revise one's own work and assist others in revising their work.

Ideas, Information, and Inquiry

The Ideas, Information, and Inquiry (III) program is designed to teach the power of disciplinary thinking—and the value of crossing disciplinary boundaries. No student arrives at Carolina with a full understanding of all the academic opportunities available on campus. Few understand how multiple disciplines rigorously define and test problems or create and share knowledge. III courses introduce students to disciplines they may not even be aware of early in their academic careers with the possibility they could decide to major or minor in such areas.

III classes are large (typically 250 students), four-credit, broadly interdisciplinary courses that introduce students to a wide range of academic subject areas and to four key capacities. They are taught by teams of three faculty members whose disciplinary, research, and/or scholarly approaches differ significantly from one another. Ordinarily, this means that groups will include faculty from each of the three divisions of the College and/or from similarly diverse perspectives in the professional schools, but groups may demonstrate sufficient breadth in other ways.

Courses are organized around a broad theme that highlights the different approaches among the team. Instructors explore with students the strengths, weaknesses, distinctions, and similarities among disciplines and approaches. III courses also help students to develop four key capacities that they will extend through further study: foundations of data science, global awareness, principles of evidence, and collaboration. Approximately one credit hour (of four) is devoted specifically to data science and data literacy. Instructor teams without expertise in data science will be supported by College-level resources.

III courses are open to traditional first- and second-year students and to transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. Students are strongly encouraged to take their III during the first year but may defer it to their second year. It must be taken for credit and for a grade. Students may not receive credit for more than one III. 4 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Compare and contrast three distinct ways of addressing a question.
2. Use data and evidence to apply key methods of and concerns associated with data science.
3. Situate ideas and experiences in global contexts.
4. Collaborate with others for mutual benefit.

College Thriving

All students must take College Thriving (EDUC 101), an introduction to the research, resources, and practical skills that facilitate thriving in college and beyond. The course contributes to students' ability to study systematically, learn deeply, and monitor and foster their own well-being. College Thriving empowers all students to participate fully in the opportunities of a research university and find personal and institutional resources to support them in a demanding academic setting. It must be taken for credit and a grade. 2 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Increase and appreciate the significance of self-awareness.
2. Value a liberal arts education.
3. Set goals, plan, and reflect upon learning using aspects of using learning science: metacognition, self-regulated learning, and motivation.
4. Describe academic strategies, policies, and pathways and their link to resources, such as academic advising and career services.
5. Reflect on the science of thriving: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, healthy relationships, resilience, stress, and other aspects of well-being.
6. Demonstrate mastery of basic mental health, drug and alcohol, and sexual wellness practices.

Global Language

Students are required to complete courses or demonstrate proficiency in the study of a foreign language through level 3. Certain majors may require additional levels of foreign language study. Students are strongly encouraged to begin this requirement in their first or second semester.

By way of foreign language study through level 3, students consider the nature and structure of their native language and reflect upon their own cultural norms while gaining functional linguistic proficiency in the language of study, as well as an appreciation of the cultures and worldviews represented.

Native speakers of a language other than English (e.g., who attended all or most of high school in the native country with a language of instruction other than English) can satisfy the foreign language requirement with Writing at the Research University

(ENGL 105). Experiential speakers (e.g., heritage speakers of Chinese or students who have lived abroad for an extended period, etc.) can satisfy their requirement with that language if the language is taught at UNC and they place beyond level 3 on a departmentally provided assessment.

Learning Outcomes

1. Communicate orally and in writing in a foreign language about a variety of real-life situations with a variety of audiences.
2. Demonstrate comprehension of oral and written texts in a foreign language on a wide range of topics to discuss everyday life, as well as life in a cross-cultural context.
3. Apply perspectives, practices, and ideas associated with the culture(s) of a foreign language.

FOCUS CAPACITIES

During their Carolina careers, students take a set of Focus Capacity (FC) courses that introduce and reinforce a set of focused capacities that help them identify, discover, explore, and act.

FC classes are offered by departments and focus on developing particular capacities through substantive study of course content. The capacities support a breadth of subject matter and encourage faculty from diverse departments to develop courses that share their expertise with students.

The capacities themselves are composed of habits of perception, discrimination, and analysis that take distinct form by reference to serious study of a subject. The courses not only engage specific activities and content but also bring variety, depth, and opportunities for transfer to the knowledge a student acquires.

FCs may be introductory or mid-level courses in a disciplinary progression, or they may be on specific topic areas that are not in such a progression. Any department may offer classes that fulfill any focus capacity as long as they meet the learning outcomes for that capacity.

In general, FC courses should be numbered below 400 and offered regularly (ideally at least once every two years). When appropriate, courses for advanced undergraduates and graduate students (numbered 400-699) may also fulfill a FC. For smaller and/or interdisciplinary departments that may not be able to commit to offering a given FC course every two years, a lower threshold (e.g., every four years) may be used. Approved FC courses that have not been offered in four years will be reviewed by the General Education Oversight Committee, in collaboration with the offering department, to determine whether they should remain with an FC label in the general education curriculum.

FC classes sustain the recurring capacities of inquiry that guide the general education mission. As appropriate to the course's topic, each class should:

- Pose problems and questions that require systematic thinking about evidence, argument and uncertainty.
- Consider its content in the context of human difference between and within societies; the full range of legitimate debate in its field; and/or change over time.
- Require:

Focus Capacities

Aesthetic and Interpretive Analysis

Creative Expression, Practice, and Production

Engagement with the Human Past

Ethical and Civic Values

Global Understanding and Engagement

Natural Scientific Investigation

Power, Difference, and Inequality

Quantitative Reasoning

Ways of Knowing

One Focus Capacity course must include or be associated with a one-credit Empirical Investigation Lab.

- Writing totaling at least 10 pages in length, or the intellectual equivalent.⁶
- Presenting material to the class, smaller groups, or the public through oral presentations, webpages, or other means that enable corroboration of fact and argument.⁷
- Collaborating in pairs or groups to learn, design, solve, create, build, research, or similar.⁸

By incorporating these elements, FC courses ensure that students encounter a broad array of academic ideas, approaches, and information across the liberal arts, as well as develop crucial capacities for future study and life. Courses that do not meet one or more of these recurring capacities must include an explanation as to why such inclusion would be inappropriate for the topic area. The General Education Oversight Committee reviews these requests.

Courses may fulfill a maximum of two focus capacities. A course fulfilling two focus capacities must meet all the requirements for both. Students may count a course fulfilling two focus capacities for only one such requirement. Thus, they need to take nine courses to meet these requirements. An FC course may count toward a major at the discretion of the offering department of the major.

All FC courses must be taken for credit and for a grade. Three credits are required for each, though courses may require additional credit hours. Courses must include substantial attention to the learning outcomes of the capacity or capacities of which they are part; however, as substantive courses in significant areas of academic study, they also accomplish learning outcomes in addition to those of their focus capacities. For example, an introductory physics and astronomy course might meet the criteria for the Natural Scientific Investigation Focus Capacity, but would also include learning outcomes, subject matter, and activities related to physics and astronomy.

⁶ Examples include a 10-page paper or multiple shorter papers that address research questions or argue a point of view; short in-class writing activities; playwriting; fiction composition; discussion board or blog contributions. Intellectual equivalents might include:

- Performance: perform multiple scenes, or present sense memory exercises.
- Design-oriented activities: several iterations of costume renderings or build set models.
- Compositions in formats other than the written word.

⁷ Examples include think-pair-share techniques in-class; individual student or group oral presentations; jigsaw techniques in-class; poster presentations; debates; infographics; website postings for external audiences, etc.

⁸ Examples include regular think-pair-shares in class; group exams; peer-editing work; group assignments; capstone projects, partner-based labs, makerspace team projects, etc.

Aesthetic and Interpretive Analysis

Students develop the ability to analyze literature and/or other artistic works, to understand how they relate to the historical circumstances of their creation, and to think critically about the past, present, and future contributions of these works to a shared world.

Questions for Students

1. What is the particular value of aesthetic experience and how does it generate meanings, responses, and acts of reflection?
2. What makes an artistic work different from other forms of expression?
3. How does creative attention to an aesthetic object reveal new ideas, articulate values, and reflect or enact art's functions in the world?

Learning Outcomes

1. Interpret and critique literary and artistic expression.
2. Analyze literary and artistic works in various contexts (social, political, historical, philosophical, etc.) and with regard to style, period, and the circumstances of composition.
3. Explain how aesthetic expression enhances human experience.

Creative Expression, Practice, and Production

Students engage in individual and collaborative creative expression, exploration, or production, such as in performance, visual art, composition, design, or technology. They engage with tools, techniques, methods, design processes, technologies, and materials for creating works that express, innovate, or create solutions to problems.

Questions for Students

1. What processes and practices can I use to produce meaningful expression or effective solutions with lasting impact?
2. How does collaboration and teamwork change or enhance the creative process?
3. How does a design strategy affect or enhance the creation and evaluation of a work of value?

Learning Outcomes

1. Compose, design, build, present, or perform a work that is the result of immersion in a creative process using appropriate media, tools, and techniques.
2. Explain the roles and influences of creativity, technologies, materials, and design processes in the creation of knowledge, expression, and effective solutions.
3. Evaluate their own and others' creative work to demonstrate how critique creates value in creative domains.

Engagement with the Human Past

Students acquire knowledge through evidence about human experience in one or more eras of the human past and learn to evaluate, synthesize, and communicate that evidence, applying it to their lives in the present.

Questions for Students

1. What events, conflicts, and continuities shaped an era of the human past?
2. What distinctive kinds of evidence do we use to interpret and understand the human past?
3. How have people made decisions and acted in light of historical knowledge?
4. How does the material and historical past survive in the present and affect our perception of both the past and the present?
5. What conditions and processes shape our approach to the human past?

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop knowledge of different spatiotemporal scales, patterns, ideas, figures, and events from the past.
2. Evaluate primary source material and/or other historical evidence of past conditions (e.g., behaviors, events, and social, cultural, economic, and/or political structures) and assess divergent or complementary methods, materials, and/or methodologies in interpreting the human past.
3. Assess conflicting historical narratives based on evidence and methodologies.
4. Generate and evaluate arguments based on the analysis of primary and scholarly sources.
5. Apply historical methods and knowledge to make informed judgments about the past and the present.

Ethical and Civic Values

Students develop their capacity to think carefully and critically about how to make and justify private and public decisions.

Questions for Students

1. How can people think fruitfully (individually and together) about how they should live their lives?
2. What is required to judge a standard or value as worthy of support?
3. How should we distinguish between prejudices and reasonable grounds for value judgments?
4. What considerations—stories, reasons, testimony, documents, data, etc.—can justify our values and commitments, whether personal or social?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the contexts in which questions of justification arise.
2. Assess ethical values in terms of reasons offered.
3. Recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value, evaluating ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities.
4. Analyze the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic spheres.

Global Understanding and Engagement

Students study and engage with global processes shaping the world and its peoples, including those beyond the North Atlantic region (United States, Canada, and Western Europe). They develop deep knowledge of historic or contemporary roles and differential effects of human organizations and actions on global systems.

Questions for Students

1. What forces connect and distinguish the experiences of peoples, societies, and human organization around the world?
2. How can I understand and compare differing worldviews?
3. What connections and differences exist between particular worldviews, experiences, societies, or power structures?
4. What ideas, approaches, and international sources allow scholars to compare societies?

Learning Outcomes

1. Classify and analyze diverse historical, social, and political exchanges that shape nations, regions, and cultural traditions of the world.
2. Translate among civic cultures, social values, and moral commitments that characterize peoples and societies, including those beyond the North Atlantic region.
3. Assess ways that political and economic institutions shape contemporary global relations.
4. Explain human and environmental challenges that transcend national borders.

Natural Scientific Investigation

Students learn how to make and interpret scientific descriptions and explanations of the natural world, practice the skills of scientific inquiry, and evaluate scientific evidence within the contexts of both scientific communities and society.

Questions for Students

1. What rules govern the natural world and how are they discovered, tested, and validated?
2. What is distinctive about the approach to understanding employed in the natural sciences?
3. What challenges are encountered in making measurements of the natural world?
4. What are the limits of investigation in the natural sciences?

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to use scientific knowledge, logic, and imagination to construct and justify scientific claims about phenomena, including validation through rigorous empirical testing.
2. Analyze and apply processes of natural scientific inquiry as dictated by the phenomena and questions at hand. These include generating and testing hypotheses or theories; using logic and creativity to design investigations to test these hypotheses; collecting and interpreting data; making inferences that respect measurement error; building and justifying arguments and explanations; communicating and defending conclusions; revising arguments and conclusions based on new evidence and/or feedback from peers; and synthesizing new knowledge into broader scientific understanding.
3. Evaluate science-related claims and information from popular and/or peer-reviewed sources by examining the relationship between the evidence, arguments, and conclusions presented and by assessing consistency with existing knowledge from valid and reliable scientific sources.
4. Identify, assess, and make informed decisions about ethical issues at the intersections of the sciences and society.

Power, Difference, and Inequality

Students engage with the histories, perspectives, politics, intellectual traditions, and/or expressive cultures of populations and communities that have historically been disempowered, and the structural and historical processes by which that disempowerment has endured and changed.

Questions for Students

1. What are the relevant structures, institutions, ways of thinking, and practices that create, maintain, and change social, economic, and political inequalities?
2. What practices have been implemented and institutionalized to address social, economic, and political inequalities?

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize the relationship between inequality and social, economic, and political power.
2. Analyze configurations of power and the forms of inequality and bias they produce.
3. Evaluate dynamics of social, economic, and political inequality in relation to specific historical contexts.
4. Interrogate the systemic processes by which forms of inequality are sustained and how these processes have been and are resisted and transformed.

Quantitative Reasoning

Students learn to comprehend and apply mathematical concepts in authentic contexts, developing tools for reasoning with data, logic, and quantitative methods.

Questions for Students

1. What is the role of mathematics in organizing and interpreting measurements of the world?
2. How can mathematical models and quantitative analysis be used to summarize or synthesize data into knowledge and predictions?
3. What methodology can we apply to validate or reject mathematical models or to express our degree of confidence in them?

Learning Outcomes

1. Summarize, interpret, and present quantitative data in mathematical forms, such as graphs, diagrams, tables, or mathematical text.
2. Develop or compute representations of data using mathematical forms or equations as models and use statistical methods to assess their validity.
3. Make and evaluate important assumptions in the estimation, modeling, and analysis of data, and recognize the limitations of the results.
4. Apply mathematical concepts, data, procedures, and solutions to make judgments and draw conclusions.
5. Synthesize and present quantitative data to others to explain findings or to provide quantitative evidence in support of a position.

This capacity presumes that the enrolled students already have the requisite mathematical skills that may be established through appropriate assessment or by completion of an online or classroom-based course in quantitative literacy and can:

1. Recognize and apply basic calculations (including fractions, percentages, exponents, and radicals), distributive and commutative properties, and basic logic.

2. Use functions and operations, including exponential, logarithmic, and piecewise linear functions.
3. Manipulate equations to express them in different ways and/or find solutions.
4. Qualitatively sketch basic functions (e.g., linear, quadratic, power laws, exponential, logarithmic).
5. Solve word problems that lead to systems of linear (and possibly quadratic) equations in two variables.

Ways of Knowing

Students develop intellectual humility, learning to question assumptions, categories, and norms that structure their worldviews and to understand the sources and effects of biases. They learn, use, and distinguish strengths and weaknesses of one or more approach(es) to knowledge of the unfamiliar, such as: aesthetically, philosophically, linguistically, historically, or culturally remote forms of knowledge and worldmaking, or formal logic, scientific practice, and similar formalized approaches to countering bias and creating knowledge.

Questions for Students

1. What norms and expectations do I take for granted?
2. What categories and concepts frame my assumptions, experiences, and beliefs?
3. What practices of investigation or inquiry best challenge those assumptions and expectations?
4. How can I consider whether my beliefs might be wrong?

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize and use one or more approach(es) to developing and validating knowledge of the unfamiliar world.
2. Evaluate ways that temporal, spatial, scientific, and philosophical categories structure knowledge.
3. Interrogate assumptions that underlie our own perceptions of the world.
4. Employ strategies to mitigate or adjust for preconceptions and biases.
5. Apply critical insights to understand patterns of experience and belief.

Empirical Investigation Lab

One Focus Capacity course must include or be associated with a one-credit Empirical Investigation Lab. In such labs, students participate in measurement, data collection and analysis, and hypothesis testing connected to the course content. An Empirical Investigation Lab is not usually a separate class; ordinarily it is a fourth credit attached to another Focus Capacity class.

Learning Outcomes

1. Take empirical measurements using appropriate apparatus.
2. Generate and test hypotheses.
3. Gather, store, and organize data.
4. Analyze and report on data and hypothesis testing.

REFLECTION AND INTEGRATION

As students move through the curriculum, IDEAS in Action calls for them to put their capacities into practice through concrete experiences. These opportunities help students reflect upon, deepen, and connect knowledge and capacities.

Research and Discovery

Through a course or outside experience, students must immerse themselves in a research project, incorporating reflection and revision to produce and disseminate original scholarship or creative work. Courses (Focus Capacity or not) must address all five learning outcomes below, although the time spent on each outcome may be unequal. A Research and Discovery course should have a substantial focus on the learning outcomes, constituting at least one-third of the final course grade or one-third of the course time. Non-course experiences, such as mentored research, should include reflection on each of the five outcomes.

Students immerse themselves in a research project and experience the reflection and revision involved in producing and disseminating original scholarship or creative works.

Questions for Students

1. How do I establish my point of view, take intellectual risks, and begin producing original scholarship or creative works?
2. How do I narrow my topic, critique current scholarship, and gather evidence in systematic and responsible ways?
3. How do I evaluate my findings and communicate my conclusions?

Learning Outcomes

1. Frame a topic, develop an original research question or creative goal, and establish a point of view, creative approach, or hypothesis.
2. Obtain a procedural understanding of how conclusions can be reached in a field and gather appropriate evidence.
3. Evaluate the quality of the arguments and/or evidence in support of the emerging product.
4. Communicate findings in clear and compelling ways.
5. Critique and identify the limits of the conclusions of the project and generate ideas for future work.

High-impact Experience

All students must have one high-impact experience. These are experiences that are novel to the student, substantial in commitment, and intellectual in some way.

There are six main types of high-impact experiential opportunities:

- Active research involvement
- Community service

Reflection and
Integration

Research and
Discovery

High-impact
Experience

Communication
Beyond Carolina

E-portfolio

Campus Life
Experience

Lifetime Fitness

- Study abroad
- Internships
- Performance creation or production
- Undergraduate learning assistant

Other types may be approved by the General Education Oversight Committee if they meet the novel, substantial, and intellectual criteria. Some of these may be experienced through a course in which the instructor explicitly attaches an experiential component, such as a:

- Substantial, required field trip or field research experience integrated with the academic content.
- Hands-on, discovery-oriented research experience that is a core element of the course.
- Substantial, required service-learning experience integrated with the academic content.
- Substantial, required creative production experience integrated with the academic content.

Students may also fulfill their high-impact experience requirement through experiences not directly tied to courses if they meet the novel, substantial, and intellectual criteria. Examples include:

- Mentored research resulting in a thesis, presentation, or other authored product.
- An internship paired with academic reflection.
- Community service or volunteer work paired with academic reflection.
- Study abroad that results in a substantially new experience outside the classroom.

Course requirements and non-course opportunities will be approved through the Experiential Education office. The same course or experience may not be counted for both the Research and Discovery and the High-impact Experience requirements.

Students enrich and expand their academic study by engaging in compelling applied experiences that transform their learning.

Questions for Students

1. How do things I've learned in the classroom apply to outside settings?
2. How can experiences and observations raise or answer questions in academic settings?
3. How can I meaningfully reflect to help navigate complexities and ambiguities I encounter?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the connections between academic studies and outside-the-classroom experiences and observations.
2. Apply knowledge in complex or ambiguous situations.
3. Develop questions from experiences and observations to deepen and extend academic inquiry.

Communication Beyond Carolina

Students will practice presentation, discussion, collaboration, and teamwork capacities for communicating at the University and beyond.⁹ They will develop strategies for careful listening and effective communication in the public sphere.¹⁰ Students build capacities for producing and listening to oral and digital communication across a range of contexts. They learn to persuasively convey knowledge, ideas, and information to multiple audiences and to listen to knowledge, ideas, and information from others.

This course is ordinarily taken during the junior or senior year. It may be taught as part of a major or minor, as a standalone course on communication, as a global language course (above level 3), or as an elective. At least 70 percent of the content of the course must focus on the capacities and practices of communication and collaboration, understanding and adapting messages to distinct audiences, listening seriously to the messages of others, and taking and offering feedback from peers and audiences. The class must include communication designed for at least three distinct audiences. At least one of these audiences must be a public (i.e., not a purely professional, scientific, or closed group). The College will provide resources to help instructors fulfill these outcomes. Must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits

⁹ Gil, K., and Williford, L. "Results from the 2013 Undergraduate Alumni Survey"; Association of American Colleges & Universities. "Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work." Washington, DC: AACU, 2018. <https://www.aacu.org/research/2018-future-of-work>

¹⁰ "Verbal empowerment consists of interpretive (or exigetical) and expressive skills. Civic and political action must begin from a diagnosis of our current situation and move from that diagnosis to a prescription for a response. Such interpretive work... can be done only in and through language." (Allen, Danielle. *Education and Equality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, p. 40). See also Steinberg, K. S., Hatcher, J. A., & Bringle, B. G. (2008). "Civic-Minded Graduate: A North Star." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 18, 19-33; Englund, T. (2000) "Rethinking democracy and education: Towards an education of deliberative citizens", *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32:2, 305-313, DOI: 10.1080/002202700182772; McMillan, J, and Harriger, K. (2002) "College Students and Deliberation: A Benchmark Study", *Communication Education*, 51:3, 237-253, DOI:10.1080/03634520216518.

Students build capacities for producing and listening to oral communication across a range of contexts. With multiple audiences, they learn to listen to and persuasively convey knowledge, ideas, and information.

Questions for Students

1. How can I engage with audiences through oral communication?
2. How do I best convey knowledge, ideas, and information effectively to different audiences in situations?
3. How can I best understand the views and ideas of others, both individually and collectively?
4. What are the best ways of strategizing and delivering oral communication for achieving my intended outcomes?
5. How can media or digital compositions extend my ability to communicate?

Learning Outcomes

1. Ascertain the expectations, opportunities, and barriers to oral communication in distinct situations.
2. Tailor communications to different kinds of settings, including individual, small group, and public communication.
3. Tailor communications to different levels of expertise (inexpert, informed, expert), and to varying levels of alignment (resistant, ambivalent, supportive) and distinct contexts.
4. Make informed situation- and audience-sensitive strategic choices in content and delivery.
5. Improve ability to move audiences, as measured by best practices, audience feedback, and instructor feedback.

Lifetime Fitness

To gain facility and knowledge of life-long physical wellness, students must participate in a Lifetime Fitness (LFIT) class. This class combines instruction in and practice of a sports or physical activity along with instruction in physical well-being (exercise and fitness) to promote lifelong fitness. Students who are members of a varsity athletic team, ROTC, or a similar University organized and sponsored program combining physical activity with instruction in lifetime fitness are exempted from this requirement. Many students fulfill LFIT in the first year, but it may be taken at any point in the student's college career. Pass/Fail, 1 credit

Campus Life Experience

All students will attend at least two on-campus organized activities, such as performances, talks, panels, workshops, etc., for each semester they are enrolled on campus. Students may attend more or fewer events in a given semester as long as they attend the total number required during their career at UNC-Chapel Hill. Events that are required for a course the student is taking are still eligible to count toward the Campus Life Experience (CLE) requirement. To be eligible, events must be sponsored by a UNC-Chapel Hill department, unit or recognized student organization. Events may include students on the program but may not be entirely composed of students.

Events taking place off campus or at other colleges or universities may be approved for a CLE if they are substantially similar to eligible on-campus events.¹¹

Leadership or sustained, active involvement in Student Government or a recognized student organization may be counted as one of the two CLE requirements each semester. Students who are unable to fulfill these requirements for personal, family, or other reasons may request a waiver.

Students experience the artistic, intellectual, and political life of the UNC campus and connect these experiences with their academic work.

Questions for Students

1. How do public and campus events enrich and broaden college learning?
2. How do performances and intellectual talks inspire new ways of interpreting and understanding the world?
3. How do political lectures and debates bridge or illuminate important differences?

Learning Outcomes

1. Attend a diverse set of campus performances, lectures, and events.
2. Interpret performances, lectures, and events in light of academic study.
3. Participate in the life of a university campus and its activities outside the classroom.

E-portfolio

Students will have access to and be encouraged to use an electronic portfolio system (e-portfolio). The system will allow students to curate their work and experiences and foster connections between academic and outside experiences. It will also encourage students to reflect on their learning beyond the classroom.¹² The e-portfolio system will be maintained centrally.

E-portfolios will be integrated into the curriculum at multiple levels, with initial engagements beginning in the first semester and ongoing activities in courses that follow both in the major and the College. These activities will enable both archiving and assessment of learning artifacts and activities and showcasing and sharing of the intellectual and professional work of students. E-portfolios will also facilitate the capturing and credentialing of co-curricular work.

¹¹ Attendance will be verified through the e-portfolio, where students are also encouraged to reflect upon these activities and connect them with other academic and co-curricular experiences. Instructors are encouraged to assign or incorporate relevant campus events into class and to use e-portfolios to connect them.

¹² Moos, D.C., and C.A. Stewart. "Technology Uses in Instruction." In *Connecting Self-regulated Learning and Performance with Instruction Across High School Content Areas* (pp. 417-440). Springer, Cham, 2018.; Usher, EL, and DH Schunk. "Social Cognitive Theoretical Perspective of Self-Regulation." In Schunk, D. (Ed.), Greene, J. (Ed.). *Handbook of Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

RULES AND POLICIES

Disciplinary Distribution

All students must take at least one general education course (FYS/FYL, Focus Capacity, High-impact Experience, Research and Discovery, or Communication Beyond Carolina) in each of the three major divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences (humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences). This requirement fulfills Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Standard 9.3.C.¹³

Credit by Examination

Students may substitute up to five by-examination courses for FC courses. Course equivalency must be reviewed by the GEOC to determine whether the examination assesses capacities similar to those in the relevant Focus Capacity course.

Students may also substitute by-examination credit (BE/PL credits) for Global Language requirements. Additional by-examination credit may be used for credit or placement outside the general education curriculum but may not be used to substitute for general education courses.

Transfer Credits/Transfer Students

In general, students transferring in as sophomores must fulfill the Writing at the Research University course and all FC requirements but not FYS/FYL, III, or College Thriving. However, transfer students are encouraged to take all of these courses. Students transferring in as sophomores or beyond (including Early College students) may transfer FC courses based on equivalencies established by GEOC in consultation with relevant departments. Students transferring in under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) are exempt from the general education requirements except for Global Language.

Governance

A General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) will oversee assessment, examine results, and propose curricular change. Committee members will have revolving terms.

The committee will comprise:

- Five members of the voting faculty elected by the faculty, including :
 - One faculty member in a social sciences department.
 - One faculty member in a fine arts or humanities department.

¹³ <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>, page 21-22

- One faculty member in a natural sciences and mathematics department.
- Two additional members of the voting faculty.
- One member of the voting faculty appointed by dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.
- The chair of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) or her/his designee from EPC membership.
- Two undergraduate students appointed by UNC Student Government.
- The curriculum director of The Office of Undergraduate Education (ex officio).
- The senior associate dean for undergraduate education (ex officio).

The committee will operate under the auspices of the Administrative Boards of the College of Arts and Sciences and will be supported sufficiently to allow ongoing assessment and consideration of innovations in and amendment of the curriculum. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will gather and provide appropriate data as needed to support the committee's work. In the third year following implementation, the Administrative Boards of the College will review the GEOC's composition and charge.

Upon commencement of the IDEAs in Action Curriculum, the five elected members will be chosen in the earliest possible faculty election: two members to two-year terms, two members to three-year terms, and one member to a one-year term. Subsequent members will be elected in the annual faculty election process as terms end. Members may be elected to no more than two consecutive elected terms on the GEOC. New and continuing courses will be reviewed and approved for the curriculum by the GEOC with support from the Office of Undergraduate Curricula.

Periodic Review

The GEOC will oversee periodic review of elements of the general education curriculum, assessing successes and weaknesses and identifying opportunities for improvement. In general, GEOC membership will decide the order and priority for assessment of elements of the curriculum. However, it will take on the following assessments unless the membership determines these are inappropriate or impractical:

- In the third year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
 - Global language
 - Lifetime Fitness
 - College Thriving
- In the fourth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
 - Writing at the Research University
 - III
- In the fifth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
 - Communication Beyond Carolina

- In the sixth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
 - Full review of the curriculum

Major Articulation

The GEOC will be consulted on any requested changes to majors and will assess the extent to which such changes might threaten or undermine the general education curriculum. In general, majors may not increase the number of courses required beyond the maximum currently required in their division or school without a clear and compelling need to do so. These maximums are (BA degrees):

- Fine arts: 12 courses (36 hours)
- Humanities: 10 courses (30 hours)
- Natural science/math: 16 courses (34 hours)
- Social and behavioral sciences: 16 courses (49 hours)

Assessment and Data Collection

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will assist in the ongoing collection of assessment data about courses that are included in the general education curriculum, as well as on the curriculum in general. In part, these data collection efforts will be used to evaluate whether the curricular goals for student learning are being met.

Course Level and Institutional Data about the Curriculum

Assessments will be included within classes and/or outside classes to examine students' success in learning relative to general education outcomes. These assessment activities will be developed in consultation with faculty so that they may be easily embedded in course activities and/or directly evaluate students' learning in the terms of learning outcomes. Assessment activities will be proactive and may involve mixed methods (qualitative, quantitative, interpretive) to fully understand how students have developed in and used these capacities.

The goal of course-level assessment as part of the IDEAs in Action Curriculum is to measure students' achievement of these specific capacities for general education. Departments, instructors, and curricula are responsible for assessing the quality of the substantive content beyond these capacities. Additionally, questions may be included in student evaluations of Focus Capacity courses, developed in consultation with course instructors, to identify student perceptions and experiences regarding the identified learning outcomes for those courses.

Curriculum Level

To provide a holistic assessment of achievement of the overall curriculum's goals,

cohorts of students will be surveyed and interviewed upon entry to Carolina, at the end of their sophomore year, and at the end of their senior year to assess their experiences and perceptions with the curriculum outlined in this proposal. In addition, examination of student e-portfolios or other submitted student work may be used to assess students' experience and intellectual activities associated with the curriculum. These cohort assessments will focus on the goals of the IDEAs in Action curriculum using Association of American Colleges and Universities Value and other applicable rubrics, in collaboration with Carolina Metrics when appropriate. Students may also be asked to voluntarily participate in standardized assessments of student learning, such as the ETS HEIghten exam, to assess achievement in the capacities.

Alumni

Alumni will be surveyed periodically, focusing on continuing measures of the influence of academic work at Carolina, as well as large-scale goals in economic, citizenship, leadership, and lifelong-learning domains.

Amendment

Faculty with innovative ideas for implementing the goals of any part of the IDEAs in Action curriculum can propose these innovations to the GEOC, which may endorse innovative pilot efforts for possible inclusion. Pilot efforts do not need to be approved by the Educational Policy Committee but may be carried out upon endorsement by the GEOC and support of the dean of the College. Such efforts must include standards and methods for assessment agreed upon before the idea is carried out to determine the success of the innovation.

Amendments to the curriculum (either in response to successful pilots or to assessments) will come from the GEOC to the Educational Policy Committee, which will consider them for support at Faculty Council.



**COLLEGE OF ARTS
AND SCIENCES**

Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
UNC College of Arts and Sciences

Questions/Comments
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