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## Memorandum to Presidents

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Vol. 23, No. 1

**DATE:** February 17, 2023

**TO:** Presidents, State-Operated Campuses  
Presidents, Community Colleges  
Statutory College Contacts

**FROM:** Shadi Shahedipour-Sandvik, Provost-in-Charge

**SUBJECT:** *Policy and Updated Guidance: State University of New York General Education*

This memorandum provides updated guidance on the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees' Resolution 2021-48, *State University of New York General Education Policy*, adopted on November 9, 2021. The original guidance (Vol. 21, No. 1) was distributed on December 21, 2021.

In response to questions received as campuses have prepared to implement the SUNY GE policy, a discussion draft of updated guidance was distributed in October 2022 and the feedback obtained was utilized to develop the current guidance. Rather than provide updates via a separate document, all updates have been incorporated into the original guidance, which has resulted in the single integrated guidance document presented herein. To highlight the updates, an executive summary precedes the updated guidance. And, for historical purposes, the original guidance will be available on the SUNY GE website, but will be marked as historical and superseded by the updated guidance.

For questions about this memorandum, please contact the Office of the Provost at [provost@suny.edu](mailto:provost@suny.edu). This guidance, along with additional information and resources, is also available on the SUNY Academic Affairs website (see [SUNY General Education Framework](#)).

**Copy:** President, University Faculty Senate  
President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges  
President, Student Assembly  
SUNY Chief Academic Officers, All Campuses  
SUNY Registrars, All Campuses

**UPDATED IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK GENERAL EDUCATION**

Updated February 17, 2023  
Original Distributed December 21, 2021

# **UPDATED IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF UPDATES INTRODUCED IN THIS VERSION

The Memorandum to Presidents issued in December 2021 has been updated to incorporate guidance in response to questions received as campuses have prepared to implement the SUNY GE policy. In some cases, the update includes new language to clarify guidance previously provided. In other cases, the new language is to introduce guidance not included in the original guidance. The following summarizes what has changed from the original guidance and to the updated version. For complete details for each, please refer to the applicable section of this updated guidance.

- Three Knowledge and Skills areas include new language for the purpose of providing clarification. **Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (DEISJ)** was updated to address the questions of faculty qualifications to teach DEISJ courses. **Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)** was updated to address questions about the approvability of social science courses or courses in other disciplines for this category. **World History and Global Awareness** was updated to address questions about whether there was a centrally established definition for the terms “well-being” and “sustainability.”
- **Hold Harmless** was newly added to establish expectations during the transition to the new SUNY GE that forefronts student success in terms of how campuses support students. Included in this are expectations regarding continuing students, students with interruptions in study, concurrently enrolled students, and transfer students.
- **Campus Course Review, Approval, and Reporting of SUNY GE** was updated to reinforce that under the new SUNY GE policy, campus-level approval is the final approval step, rather than also require approval by System Administration as expected under the sunset general education policy. Associated with this shift is a new reporting mechanism, which is outlined in the updated language.
- **General Education Courses do not need to be Liberal Arts and Sciences Courses** was newly added and conforming language changes were made throughout this section. This update addresses questions regarding the relationship between SUNY GE and Liberal Arts and Sciences. As of this guidance, courses are *not* required to be LAS in order to be approved for SUNY GE. This is an important shift from the guidance issued in December 2021 and provides flexibility regarding program design.
- **Approval of a Single Course in Multiple SUNY GE Categories** was updated to reinforce the need for an assessment plan for all student learning outcomes associated with such a course and to reinforce that credits for a single course may only count once toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement.
- **Multiple Courses to Complete a Single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area** was newly added to reinforce that, with the exception of Communication, it is not recommended to require multiple courses to complete a single Knowledge and Skills area. To facilitate student transfer, campuses are strongly encouraged to implement a one-to-one requirement-to-course relationship in which each SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area requires completion of a single course. If a campus determines a single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area must be met by the completion of multiple courses, campuses must understand the implications and responsibilities associated

with this decision, which are highlighted in the new language.

- **Syllabi for SUNY GE Courses** was updated to clarify that course syllabi are not required to include SUNY GE student learning outcomes verbatim.
- **Core Competencies (Critical Thinking and Reasoning; Information Literacy)** was newly added to provide guidance regarding the core competencies to address various procedural questions.
- **Programmatic Waivers** was updated to clarify guidance for how to request a waiver.
- **Assessment of the General Education Program** was updated to provide additional information about the expectations regarding assessment of general education.
- **Program Reregistration due to Changes Resulting from Implementation of the SUNY GE Framework** was newly added to address questions about whether changing general education requirements will necessitate reregistration of existing programs.
- **Seamless Transfer** was updated to reinforce the expectations of the seamless transfer policy as related to general education. Additionally, language was newly added regarding A.A.S. and A.O.S. degree programs, which are not intended to be designed for transfer. For A.A.S. programs, campuses should develop general education courses for the Knowledge and Skills areas for which the SUNY GE learning outcomes are foundational to the course, completion of these courses is to be recorded on the General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA), and if an A.A.S. student transfers, the completed SUNY GE categories and associated credits recorded on the GETA are guaranteed to transfer. For A.O.S. programs, campuses are likely to need to embed across the curriculum the SUNY GE learning outcomes for the required Knowledge and Skills areas. Importantly new is that there is no need to create a GETA for A.O.S. students; but instead, campuses are to develop internal mechanisms to verify completion of the SUNY GE for A.O.S. students. And, if an A.O.S. student transfers, the receiving campus is expected to review the student's transcript to determine the transferability of SUNY GE categories and credits.

## **SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK**

### ***SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT***

The State University of New York's overarching goal is to empower students to meet the changing demands of the 21st-century. Embedded in this goal are SUNY's commitment to broad access to the highest quality education, deep and engaged learning, and overall student success.

SUNY General Education supports these goals by creating a system-wide framework—applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs—that addresses the fundamental aims of postsecondary undergraduate education, including proficiency with essential skills and competencies, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizenry.

Moreover, SUNY General Education promotes equity by equipping SUNY undergraduates, regardless of background, program of study, or campus, with foundational capacities fostered through a broad liberal education to prepare them for further study, work, life, and global citizenship. It encourages students to explore subjects and learning experiences beyond their intended major and fosters a commitment to personal growth and life-long learning.

Importantly, SUNY General Education supports seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions and it ensures consistency in expected system-level learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches.

### ***STATEMENT OF VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

SUNY General Education (GE) is a system-wide framework applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs that addresses the fundamental goals of higher education, including proficiency with essential skills, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizenry.

SUNY's General Education rests on the following guiding principles:

1. SUNY GE promotes equity by equipping all SUNY undergraduates—regardless of background, program of study, or campus—with foundational capacities fostered through a broad liberal education to prepare them for further study, work, life, and global citizenship.
2. SUNY GE encourages students to explore subjects and learning experiences beyond their intended major and fosters a commitment to personal growth and life-long learning.
3. SUNY GE aligns with SUNY's commitment to deep and engaged learning and encourages persistence, completion, and success.
4. SUNY GE supports seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions; it ensures consistency in expected learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches.
5. SUNY GE specifies minimum requirements; campuses may set additional expectations, as long as those expectations remain consistent with SUNY policy, NYS regulation and education law, and institutional accreditation standards and expectations.
6. SUNY GE is internally consistent and coherent, and readily understood by students, faculty, staff,

and other internal and external stakeholders.

7. SUNY GE includes clear and measurable student learning outcomes, assessed by campuses on an ongoing basis to ensure high-quality educational experiences for all undergraduate students; similarly, SUNY GE policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is effective, relevant, and up-to-date.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK**

The SUNY GE framework includes twelve categories of knowledge, skills and competencies—ten knowledge and skills areas expose students to different ways of knowing so that they can make reasoned judgements outside as well as inside their academic field, and enabling them to develop diverse perspectives and global understanding; and two core competencies that extend beyond discipline-specific knowledge and skills. Among the specific knowledge and skills categories is a new requirement, *Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice*. This requirement aligns with the SUNY Board of Trustees' *Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (adopted September 10, 2015) as well as SUNY's *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Phase I Action Plan* (2021), which recommends including a diversity category in the general education requirements. In addition, explicitly delineated skills and competencies in quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, oral and written communication, critical thinking and reasoning, and information literacy help to ensure SUNY graduates have the 21st century knowledge, skills, and competencies they need, while also satisfying institutional accreditation expectations. While Middle States also requires technological competency, disciplines vary in terms of the technologies needed to support scholarly, creative, and applied endeavors. Campus faculty can best determine what constitutes technological competency in their respective disciplinary area and design curricula accordingly. This approach to a MSCHE-required competency further illustrates a key feature of the SUNY GE framework: it provides flexibility for campuses to develop innovative and robust local general education programs for their respective undergraduate degrees.

### **SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS, AND CORE COMPETENCIES**

1. **Knowledge and Skills Areas** (a minimum of 7 of 10 categories of knowledge and skills are required for AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs)

***The following four are specifically required for all undergraduate-degree programs***

Communication – Written and Oral

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)

Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)

***In addition, a minimum of three of the following six are required for AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs***

Humanities

Social Sciences

The Arts

US History and Civic Engagement

World History and Global Awareness

World Languages

2. **Core Competencies** (both required for all undergraduate-degree programs)

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

Information Literacy

See **Section B** in the procedural guidance, including the summary **Table 1**, for more details on SUNY GE required minimum categories and credits by specific degree type.

The required student learning outcomes for each of the 12 categories of the SUNY General Education framework—ten knowledge and skills areas and two core competencies—are below. Note that the learning outcomes for each category are intentionally broad, to ensure seamless transfer as well as faculty flexibility. Campus faculty shall engage with the learning outcomes and develop language appropriate to the level of challenge to students warranted by the discipline and college-level study.

Faculty may find Bloom’s Taxonomy and its subsequent revision<sup>1</sup> helpful in this regard. Note also, the guidance specific to each category.

### ***SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS***

#### ***Communication – Written and Oral (Required)***

Students will

- research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details;
- demonstrate coherent college-level communication (written and oral) that informs, persuades, or otherwise engages with an audience;
- evaluate communication for substance, bias, and intended effect; and
- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve written and oral communication.

#### **Guidance**

*Approvable courses for this category include*

- a combination of two courses, one of which focuses more on written communication, the other on oral communication;
- a single course that combines written and oral communication;
- writing-intensive courses that also include sufficient attention to speaking skills;
- speaking-intensive courses that also include sufficient attention to writing skills.

*In considering programs such as “Writing Across the Curriculum,” campuses shall ensure that required student learning outcomes are taught, practiced, and assessed in all courses involved.*

*Remedial or ESL courses are not acceptable within this category; nor shall students place out of this SUNY GE requirement by high scores on Regents and/or SAT (or similar) exams.*

#### ***Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (Required)***

Students will

- describe the historical and contemporary societal factors that shape the development of individual and group identity involving race, class, and gender;
- analyze the role that complex networks of social structures and systems play in the creation and perpetuation of the dynamics of power, privilege, oppression, and opportunity; and
- apply the principles of rights, access, equity, and autonomous participation to past, current, or future social justice action.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.net/>



## Guidance

*Campuses may expand on the definition of individual and group identity to include additional aspects of diversity. However, consistent with SUNY Seamless Transfer policy, if a sending institution certifies that a student has completed the Diversity: Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice requirement, the receiving institution must accept that this SUNY general education requirement is satisfied.*

*As called for in the Board of Trustees' resolution, SUNY System Administration will work with campuses to ensure faculty have the training and resources to support the teaching and learning needs in this category.*

*This category, like all categories, is the responsibility of faculty. As is the case for all courses, faculty teaching courses approved for this category must meet the applicable NYSED regulation as follows: "All members of the faculty shall have demonstrated by training, earned degrees, scholarship, experience, and by classroom performance or other evidence of teaching potential, their competence to offer the courses and discharge the other academic responsibilities which are assigned to them."<sup>2</sup>*

### **Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning) (Required)**

Students will demonstrate mathematical skills and quantitative reasoning, including the ability to

- interpret and draw inferences from appropriate mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, or schematics;
- represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, or verbally as appropriate; and
- employ quantitative methods such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, or statistics to solve problems.

## Guidance

***N.B.: Campuses may approve courses outside the disciplinary area of Mathematics (e.g., courses in statistics, computer science, data science, formal/symbolic logic, etc.) for this required category, provided the student learning outcomes for Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning) are met within the course.***

*Remedial courses are not acceptable within this category; nor shall students place out of this SUNY GE requirement by high scores on Regents and/or SAT (or similar) exams.*

### **Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning) (Required)**

Students will demonstrate scientific reasoning applied to the natural world, including

- an understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of data analysis or mathematical modeling; and
- application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

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<sup>2</sup> Regulations of the Commissioner, [52.2 Standards for the registration of undergraduate and graduate curricula](#)

## Guidance

***N.B.: The required Knowledge and Skills Area of Natural Science (and Scientific Reasoning) is included in SUNY GE to be consistent with the Middle States general education requirement for Scientific Reasoning. During the policy development process, overwhelming feedback from SUNY campuses indicated that many courses in the social sciences (and possibly other disciplines) include scientific reasoning in their learning outcomes. For this reason, campuses have the latitude to approve a social science course or courses in other disciplines for this category, if the learning outcomes for the course include demonstrating scientific reasoning applied to the respective disciplinary area(s), as described in the student learning outcomes.***

*For courses in the traditional natural science disciplines (e.g., chemistry, biology, physics, etc.) the inclusion of a laboratory component, though highly desirable, is not necessary for campus approval. However, because many majors (e.g., in STEM- and health-related fields) require college-level laboratory science, including for transfer, students must be advised to select courses appropriate to the current and/or planned program of study and educational goals.*

## Humanities

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities; and
- recognize and analyze nuance and complexity of meaning through critical reflections on text, visual images, or artifacts.

## Guidance

*This category does not specify a particular humanities discipline or approach.*

*Consistent with the intention to maintain splitting the Arts and Humanities into two separate categories, “performance” courses would generally not be approvable in this category unless supported by documentation that they include a preponderance of scholarly humanistic study.*

*Standard scholarly histories of the arts are approvable in both the Humanities and Arts categories.*

## Social Sciences

Students will

- describe major concepts and theories of at least one discipline in the social sciences; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena.

## Guidance

*Campuses are encouraged to approve courses that include a comprehensive introduction to a social science discipline.*

*For inter- or multi-disciplinary courses (e.g., women’s studies or the social science portions of integrated curricula), or courses that otherwise fall outside the envelope of traditional social science disciplines, course descriptions and syllabi shall demonstrate clearly:*

- *that they teach understanding of social science methodologies;*
- *which discipline(s) in the social sciences they draw on for concepts and theories; and*

- *that the majority of the text(s) used fall clearly within the social sciences.*

### ***The Arts***

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

#### **Guidance**

*Both performance-oriented and scholarly/historical offerings in the expressive arts are approvable for this category.*

*When considering performance-oriented courses for approval in the SUNY GE Arts category, campuses should include courses that engage students in the creative process directly while also fostering broader understanding of the principal form of artistic expression (e.g., appreciation, theory, history, aesthetic principles).*

*Standard scholarly histories of the arts are approvable in both the Humanities and Arts categories.*

### ***US History and Civic Engagement***

Students will

- demonstrate understanding of United States' society and/or history, including the diversity of individuals and communities that make up the nation;
- understand the role of individual participation in US communities and government; and
- apply historical and contemporary evidence to draw, support, or verify conclusions.

#### **Guidance**

*In addition to providing information about the connection of the United States' past to its present, approvable courses in this category will focus on the role of individuals within communities, and developing civic understanding and other skills for engaging in the dynamics of the diverse and pluralistic society which comprises the public life of the United States.*

### ***World History and Global Awareness***

Students will

- demonstrate knowledge of a broad outline of world history and/or the development of the distinctive features of at least one civilization or culture in relation to other regions of the world; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the structures, systems, and interrelationships among civilizations and cultures within historical and/or contemporary contexts, and their impact on wellbeing and sustainability.

#### **Guidance**

*Courses on specialized topics or periods are approvable so long as the materials demonstrate that the primary focus of the course relates to larger developments of world history. The core of the course must be central to world history and global awareness, and the treatment of that core placed in broader*

*cultural perspective so that students gain an acquaintance with world history and not just specialized knowledge of one narrowly defined topic.*

*The terms “well-being” and “sustainability” are not centrally defined. Instead, campuses are to interpret these terms within the context of the course(s) being considered for approvability for this category. Sustainability, for example, is meant to be interpreted broadly as in the sustainability of a culture, civilization, etc. (e.g., see the UN Sustainable Development Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, which include access to education, economic vitality, etc.). Although the environment may quickly come to mind when thinking about sustainability, it is quite possible for courses across a variety of disciplines to have a focus on sustainability (e.g., an investment and finance course might be designed to explore the impact of the World Bank on sustaining economies and reducing poverty).*

### **World Languages**

Students will

- exhibit basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a world language; and
- demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

#### **Guidance**

*The first college semester, or above, of a world language constitutes an approvable course in this category. American Sign Language courses are also approvable for SUNY GE World Languages.*

### **SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COMPETENCIES**

All undergraduate degree-seeking students must demonstrate the required student learning outcomes in two core competencies, *Critical Thinking and Reasoning* and *Information Literacy*.

#### ***Critical Thinking and Reasoning (Required)***

Students will

- clearly articulate an issue or problem;
- identify, analyze, and evaluate ideas, data, and arguments as they occur in their own or others' work;
- acknowledge limitations such as perspective and bias; and
- develop well-reasoned (logical) arguments to form judgments and/or draw conclusions.

#### **Guidance**

*Students need to acquire critical thinking and reasoning skills appropriate to the demands of the 21st century citizen, and campuses must have flexibility to implement and assess these learning outcomes across a diverse range of academic programs.*

*The Critical Thinking and Reasoning competency is not necessarily associated with any one course, though the student learning outcomes may be required in one or more courses. In either case, campuses must ensure that the required learning outcomes are included in each undergraduate degree curriculum.*

### ***Information Literacy (Required)***

Students will

- locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline;
- evaluate information with an awareness of authority, validity, and bias; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination.

#### **Guidance**

*Students need to acquire information literacy appropriate to the demands of the 21st century citizen, and campuses must have flexibility to implement and assess these learning outcomes across a diverse range of academic programs.*

*The Information Literacy core competency is not necessarily associated with any one course, though the student learning outcomes may be required in one or more specific courses. In either case, campuses must ensure that the required learning outcomes are included in each undergraduate degree curriculum.*

## PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE FOR SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION

### A. SUNY General Education Framework and Campus General Education Program(s)

A campus shall have one or more general education program(s) consistent with the requirements of the SUNY General Education framework. Each such program shall enable graduates of SUNY undergraduate degree programs to meet the required SUNY GE framework knowledge and skills areas and core competencies. The campus Chief Academic Officer shall provide attestation that all degree programs are reviewed for consistency with the SUNY GE framework and programs revised accordingly, as necessary.

- i. **Hold Harmless.** Campuses shall develop and implement policies and procedures that ease the transition to the new SUNY GE framework from the perspective of the student experience. In this transition, students are to be ‘held harmless’ and to this end campuses are expected to adopt the following principles:
  - a. Campus decisions should have at the forefront a goal of creating conditions and outcomes that promote student success, provide for seamless transfer, and support timely degree completion.
  - b. Where there has been no interruption of study beyond two academic years, campuses must grant students the opportunity to pursue the GE requirements in place at the time of first enrollment. For interruptions in study longer than two academic years, to promote student success and support timely degree completion, campuses may grant students the opportunity to pursue the GE requirements in place at the time of first enrollment. Additionally, while the time of first enrollment is the first point of matriculation, campuses are permitted to consider non-matriculated enrollment when determining the time of first enrollment. Campuses may also establish a procedure to allow continuing students to choose the new SUNY GE when they are eligible for another.
  - c. For students who were concurrently enrolled and successfully completed SUNY credit courses in the high school that were designated as meeting SUNY GE (either the sunseting General Education Requirements or the new General Education framework), campuses shall grant SUNY GE credit for those courses regardless of the term of matriculation and/or the general education program being completed. Campuses may consider enrollment in a SUNY credit course in the high school as the point of first enrollment.
  - d. For transfer students, general education requirements identified as complete (fully or partially) on the General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA) shall be accepted as complete at the receiving campus and applied to the degree program as appropriate.
  - e. There shall be no conditions that require a student to repeat successfully completed SUNY GE courses, content, or credits that result in extended time-to-degree, unnecessary cost, and/or duplication of effort. In addition, course transfer may not be denied based on modality alone. All aspects of the 2013 Seamless Transfer policy (located here: <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/mtp/MTP13-3SeamlessTransfer6-14-13.pdf>) referring to SUNY GER (General Education Requirements) also apply to the new SUNY GE framework for A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate degree programs. (See the “Seamless Transfer” section for implications for A.A.S. and A.O.S. degrees)
  - f. Campuses shall provide appropriate exceptions, substitutions, and allowances to the benefit of a student while satisfying the goals and outcomes of the SUNY GE framework. For example, if a student successfully completed a SUNY GE course as a non-matriculated student, a campus may elect to apply the course toward the general education program

being completed by the student.

**ii. Campus Course Review, Approval, and Reporting of SUNY GE.**

- a. Campuses shall be responsible for reviewing and approving SUNY GE courses to meet the new SUNY GE Framework Knowledge and Skills areas and Core Competencies. SUNY System Administration will no longer review individual campus courses for approval; however, SUNY System Administration will provide guidance on an as-needed basis.
- b. Campuses will submit locally approved SUNY GE courses via the SIRIS catalog function and SUNY System Administration will maintain the System-level database of approved SUNY GE courses, both current and historic.
- c. Each campus shall have a faculty review process for adding, removing, or revising SUNY GE courses and updating its official list of approved SUNY GE courses. This is a faculty process that should meaningfully include the campus faculty governance body. For this, faculty have the responsibility to verify that all applicable student learning outcomes are met in a proposed course.
- d. Each campus-approved SUNY GE course shall be aligned with the SUNY GE framework student learning outcomes for the respective category (or categories). Courses approved as meeting a SUNY general education requirement (under any general education program) shall not be removed from the historical database of approved courses. A previously approved course may be considered no longer eligible in a subsequent term if the student learning outcomes have changed and the course no longer meets the category for which it was previously approved. In such cases, the course and its effective dates must remain on the comprehensive list of approved SUNY GE courses for the historical record so that students who had completed the course in the past will continue to receive credit for the category. The campus shall ensure its local database is consistent with the System-level database.

**iii. General Education Courses do not need to be Liberal Arts and Sciences Courses.**

- a. When designing undergraduate degree programs, campuses must ensure that SUNY GE requirements and NYSED Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) requirements are both met. In many cases, SUNY GE courses may also meet the NYSED LAS definition and it may be useful for courses to serve a dual purpose as both SUNY GE and LAS, but courses are not required to be LAS in order to be approved for SUNY GE.
- b. Information about the NYSED LAS requirement can be found in the NYSED policy statement on LAS, which presents the minimum number of LAS credits for each degree and provides examples of course types that are generally considered LAS and those that are not (<http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-curriculum#c>).

**iv. Approval of a Single Course in Multiple SUNY GE Categories.**

- a. Campus faculty will determine whether a course satisfies student learning outcomes in multiple SUNY GE categories. A course approved in multiple SUNY GE categories must contain sufficient content and learning activities to address the learning outcomes for each category. And, campuses shall ensure sufficient breadth in its general education program(s).
- b. There must be an assessment plan to evaluate student attainment of all learning outcomes for each of the multiple SUNY GE categories.

- c. Credits for a single course may only count once toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement (e.g., although one three-credit course may fulfill two categories, only three—not six—credits may be counted toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement).
- v. Multiple Courses to Complete a Single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area.**
- a. With the exception of the Communication SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills area, it is not recommended to require multiple courses to complete a single Knowledge and Skills area. To facilitate student transfer, campuses are strongly encouraged to implement a one-to-one requirement-to-course relationship in which each SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area requires completion of a single course.
  - b. If a campus determines a single SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area must be met by the completion of multiple courses, campuses must understand the implications and responsibilities associated with this decision, as follows:
    - 1. The SUNY GE student learning outcomes associated with each required course must be identified on the GETA and the amount of credit provided for each learning outcome must correspond to contact/credit hour requirements (see SUNY policy: [https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc\\_id=168](https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=168)).
    - 2. For the purposes of applicability to the SUNY GE, campuses shall avoid distributing a single SUNY GE student learning outcome over multiple courses.
    - 3. The assessment plan for a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area that requires completion of multiple courses must account for the assessment of learning outcomes for the category in each course required to meet the category.
    - 4. For a student who transfers with partially fulfilled student learning outcomes for a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area, the receiving campus may advise the student to complete coursework that satisfies the remaining learning outcome(s) listed on the GETA; however, the qualifying course(s) shall not extend the student's time-to-degree or require unnecessary cost and/or duplication of effort. Where this is not feasible at the receiving campus, the sending campus shall provide cross-registration options for the student that allow for completion of the remaining learning outcome(s), which shall not extend the student's time-to-degree or require unnecessary cost and/or duplication of effort.
  - c. The SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area of Communication is the exception to this guidance due to longstanding precedent for campuses to allow for this requirement to be met either by one course that meets all student learning outcomes for this category or two courses for which one meets the Oral Communication student learning outcomes and the other meets the Written Communication student learning outcomes. If two courses are required for Communication and each course is designed foundationally as a communication course, full credits for each course may count toward the total SUNY GE credit requirement (this is the only category for which this is the case).
- vi. Approval of Courses for which a Prerequisite in the Same Discipline is an Approved SUNY GE Course.** If a campus-approved SUNY GE course is a prerequisite for other courses in the same discipline, campuses are encouraged to consider those courses for approval as well, as long as the learning outcomes build on knowledge and skills, consistent with the applicable SUNY GE learning outcomes. For example, if Biology 101 is an approved SUNY GE natural science course and a prerequisite for Biology 102, Biology 102 may be an approvable SUNY GE natural science course.



**vii. Syllabi for SUNY GE Courses.**

- a. In keeping with good practice and the expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and SUNY, the campus will ensure syllabi for SUNY GE courses make clear which SUNY GE student learning outcomes are covered.
- b. Courses approved for SUNY GE must meet the student learning outcomes, but it is not expected that all course syllabi contain the SUNY student learning outcomes verbatim. For example, faculty have the discretion to adjust language to be more accessible to students (i.e., to rephrase in language that students use) and/or to make the language specific to the course (e.g., “...in one of the natural sciences” could be rewritten as “...in biology” for a course in the biological sciences). Additionally, campuses may add to the SUNY GE student learning outcomes if a course has a broader scope (e.g., a course approved for the Knowledge and Skills Area of Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice may include aspects of individual and group identity other than those required by SUNY GE). When there are language differences, campuses should maintain internal record to document alignment with SUNY GE through a ‘crosswalk’ or similar mapping mechanism.

**viii. Core Competencies (Critical Thinking and Reasoning; Information Literacy).**

- a. Programs are to be designed with the expectation that the Core Competencies are completed, for the purpose of the SUNY GE requirement, within the first 60 credits of the program.
- b. If a course meets a Core Competency, but not a Knowledge and Skills area, the credits for this course are not applicable to the SUNY GE credit requirement. However, if a course that meets a Core Competency also meets a Knowledge and Skills area, the credits for this course are applicable to the SUNY GE credit requirement due to its designation as meeting a Knowledge and Skills area.
- c. In order for meaningful assessments of the Core Competencies to be conducted, curriculum maps should be developed that show in which courses the learning outcomes are delivered and assessed.
- d. For institutions that develop Core Competencies in an advanced manner beyond that which is required for SUNY GE may continue with this practice; however, an assessment of the Core Competencies, for the purpose of the SUNY GE requirement, must be conducted within the first 60 credits of the program.
- e. Student completion of Core Competencies must be documented on the GETA.

**ix. Equivalencies.** Consistent with SUNY-wide policy, a student may satisfy the requirements of a SUNY GE category by demonstrating college-level proficiency in the student learning outcomes through the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation (i.e., Prior Learning Assessment, Credit for Prior learning, Credit by Evaluation); campus faculty will make such determinations; the student transcript, including any general education addenda, will reflect the credits awarded and category(ies) satisfied by the assessed learning.

**x. Lower-division Courses.** In both associate- and baccalaureate-degree programs, SUNY GE helps prepare students for upper-division study across the liberal arts and sciences and in the major. Consistent with SUNY’s commitment to seamless transfer and student completion and success, the campus must ensure that students are able to complete the SUNY GE requirements within the first 60 credits of all associate-, BA-, and BS-degree programs. For specialized baccalaureate degree programs (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.), see section B for more detail.

- xi. **Advanced or Upper-division Courses.** To promote seamless transfer and timely degree completion, the campus is encouraged to complement and build on student academic preparation and prior learning by offering courses that further enrich knowledge and exercise skills. Such courses that achieve the relevant student learning outcomes may help students who transfer from non-SUNY institutions.
- xii. **Student Waivers.** Where appropriate, in accordance with SUNY-wide and local campus academic policies, the campus shall afford students the opportunity to obtain a waiver, for example, as a reasonable accommodation for a learning or other disability. Individual student waivers are at the discretion of the campus CAO or designee, and the reasons should be documented, as appropriate. Note: if a student obtains a waiver of a category, the category will be waived but the student will still need to satisfy the GE credit requirement for the program.
- xiii. **Programmatic Waivers.** Campuses may seek a waiver of a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Area and/or maximum credits for a degree for a specific academic program in cases where the program's curriculum is governed by external standards such as specialized accreditation. Note: The four specifically required Knowledge and Skills Areas will not be approved for waiver. Waiver requests must be submitted through the campus Provost to the SUNY Office of the Provost using the form located at: [https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/program-planning/forms/9\\_Seamless-Transfer-Waiver-Request-PILOT-2014-11-17.docx](https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/program-planning/forms/9_Seamless-Transfer-Waiver-Request-PILOT-2014-11-17.docx).
- xiv. **Information and Advisement for Students.** Consistent with State regulation, institutional accreditation,<sup>3</sup> and long-standing SUNY policy, the campus shall provide information and timely advisement to prospective and enrolled students about SUNY GE and local and programmatic general education requirements through its catalogs, websites, student program planning tools, and/or other sources. The campus must ensure the information is clear, accurate, complete, current, and easy to find. The Office of the Provost will work with campuses to help make information about general education requirements accessible to students and their advisors. Information should include, but is not limited to: general education requirements, including SUNY GE and local requirements; courses that students may use to satisfy SUNY GE, along with their availability and transferability; any specific general education requirements for particular majors; campus policies on grades in general education courses for native and transfer students; and effective date(s) for SUNY GE policies.
- xv. **Assessment of the General Education Program.**
  - a. The Memorandum to Presidents for the *SUNY Policy on Assessment* ([MTP Vol. 10, No. 2, II. D](#)) requires each campus to develop and implement a plan for the organized and systematic assessment of its general education program that meets or exceeds the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). MSCHE requires a general education program to be available to students in all undergraduate degree programs. Because SUNY GE has four required Knowledge and Skills areas and two Core Competencies that must be addressed in all undergraduate degree programs, it is reasonable to suggest that these comprise a *de facto* program of general education at the institution level that could be assessed institution-wide and thus meet the MSCHE expectations. The remaining

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<sup>3</sup> See MSCHE Standard III, criterion 3: *An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:....3. Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion*

Knowledge and Skills areas may vary by degree program and could be assessed as part of program assessment.

- b. Assessment plans are expected to indicate where in the curricula the student learning outcomes for the SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Areas and Core Competencies are addressed and assessed (typically through curriculum mapping), and how the results are used to improve teaching and learning. Conclusions resulting from assessment of the general education program are expected to be drawn at the institutional level in order to meet Middle States expectations. Results from any course assessments would therefore need to be aggregated in order to provide an institutional picture of assessment results and data trends. These results should then be disaggregated to determine what improvements may be needed in specific courses. Assessment of the general education program is expected to occur frequently enough to provide for timely interventions for the improvement of teaching and learning. Campuses are expected to subsequently determine the effectiveness of any interventions and any additional steps needed to effect improvement. For assistance on matters of assessment, the SUNY Council on Assessment (SCOA) has available resources (see <https://scoa.suny.edu/>).

**xvi. Review of Undergraduate Degree Programs.** The campus shall review all undergraduate degree programs, to determine consistency with the SUNY GE framework and revise programs accordingly.

**xvii. Alignment of Degree Type with Intended Purpose.** In order to minimize the possibility of students losing credit or experiencing an extended course of study due to the need to take additional credits in transfer to baccalaureate-level degree programs from programs which are not designed for transfer, it is crucial for campuses to review the types of programs they offer in the context of the needs of the students they serve. In cases where students enroll in an AAS program, but intend to transfer to a BA or BS, general education expectations may not align and students will have to take additional credits in order to graduate from the baccalaureate degree program. An assessment of whether or not students from applied degree programs transfer into BA or BS programs would indicate whether the applied program (AAS or AOS) should be revised to a transfer program. Even if transfer trends do not support changing the program award, the institution should clearly indicate in all publications whether the program is intended to lead to transfer and/or prepare students directly for the workforce.

**xviii. Program Reregistration due to Changes Resulting from Implementation of SUNY GE.**

- a. For non-licensure programs, changes in general education will require reregistration only if such changes contribute to exceeding cumulative changes since the most recent registration of one-third or more of the minimum credits required for the award (e.g., 20 credits for associate degree programs, 40 credits for baccalaureate degree programs). Changes to category names (e.g., Foreign Language to World Languages) or course titles, curricular content updating to ensure an existing course meets the new student learning outcomes for a category, and shifting a general education course from elective to required are examples of changes that are not applicable to the one-third threshold; therefore, changes in general education, in and of themselves, are *not* likely to prompt the need to reregister non-licensure programs. If a campus anticipates a significant number of revisions to non-licensure programs, please consult with your SUNY academic program reviewer (<https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/app/find-your-campus-reviewer/>), so that we can work with the campus and NYSED to determine the best way to proceed.

- b. For licensure-qualifying programs, please consult with your SUNY academic program reviewer if your campus anticipates making any changes to the curriculum so they can work with your campus and NYSED to determine the best way to proceed, including whether an exception can be granted because the changes do not impact the required content for the profession.

## **B. SUNY General Education Credit and Category Requirements**

The SUNY General Education framework is foundational in nature and relevant to *every* student seeking a SUNY undergraduate degree, while being consistent with institutional accreditation requirements<sup>4</sup> and applicable New York State Education Department curriculum expectations.

In both associate- and baccalaureate-degree programs, SUNY General Education helps prepare students for upper-division study across the liberal arts and sciences as well as requirements in the major. Consistent with SUNY's commitment to seamless transfer and student completion and success, campuses must ensure that students can complete the applicable SUNY GE requirements within the first 60 credits of undergraduate-degree programs, as specified below:

For AA-, AS-, BA-, and BS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 30 credits of SUNY GE during the first 60 credits of study;
- A minimum of seven (of ten) knowledge and skills areas, including the four specifically required; and
- The two core competencies.

For specialized baccalaureate-degree programs (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.), the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 30 credits of SUNY GE, with at least 20 credits completed during the first 60 credits of study;
- A minimum of seven (of ten) knowledge and skills areas, with a minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas completed during the first 60 credits; and
- The two core competencies.

Consistent with SUNY's commitment to establish a strong foundation for every SUNY student seeking an undergraduate degree, along with institutional accreditation expectations and NYSED degree requirements, the campus' required general education program also must be included in AAS degrees.

For AAS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- At least 20 credits of SUNY GE;
- A minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas; and
- The two core competencies.

Students in AOS-degree programs must also meet the campus general education program's required knowledge, skills, and competencies. Whether accomplished by designating freestanding SUNY GE courses and/or embedding required general education content into applied courses, curriculum

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<sup>4</sup> Middle States Commission on Higher Education <https://www.msche.org/>

mapping will help ensure the institution can demonstrate where required general education instruction is taking place and assessed.

For AOS-degree programs, the following credit and category requirements apply:

- A minimum of zero credits of SUNY GE;
- A minimum of the four specifically required SUNY GE knowledge and skills areas (freestanding or embedded); and
- The two core competencies (freestanding or embedded).

**TABLE 1. SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS**

Degree and minimum required total program credits	Minimum # SUNY GE Credits	Minimum # SUNY GE Knowledge & Skills Areas	Minimum # SUNY GE Core Competencies
Associate in Occupational Studies (60)	0	4 Embedded and/or freestanding	2 Embedded and/or freestanding
Associate in Arts (A.A.) (60)	30	7/10	2
Associate in Science (A.S.) (60)	30	7/10	2
Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) (60)	20	4/10	2
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) (120)	30	7/10	2
Bachelor of Science (B.S.) (120)	30	7/10	2
Specialized baccalaureate degrees (BBA, BE, BFA, BPS, BTech, etc.) (120)	30 *	7/10*	2

\*For specialized baccalaureate degrees, at least 20 credits and a minimum of the four specifically required knowledge and skills areas must be completed during the first 60 credits of study.

### C. Seamless Transfer

One of the goals of the SUNY General Education framework is to support seamless transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions; it ensures consistency in expected learning outcomes while enabling individual campuses to develop unique signature features, including their respective array of educational offerings and pedagogical approaches. The campus Chief Academic Officer shall provide attestation that all degree programs ensure local compliance with Seamless Transfer Requirements, which includes the transfer of general education courses. Consistent with the Policy and Guidance: Seamless Transfer Requirements (MTP, Vol. 13, No. 3):

- All aspects of the 2013 Seamless Transfer policy (located here: <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic->

[affairs/mtp/MTP13-3SeamlessTransfer6-14-13.pdf](#)) referring to SUNY GER (General Education Requirements) also apply to the new SUNY GE framework for A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate programs.

- ii. A.A.S. and A.O.S. programs are not intended to be designed for transfer; however, students do transfer to baccalaureate programs from A.A.S. and A.O.S. programs, much more so from A.A.S. programs and especially in certain disciplines such as nursing, business, and criminal justice.
  - a. For A.A.S. programs, campuses should develop general education courses for the Knowledge and Skills areas for which the SUNY GE learning outcomes are foundational to the course (these are often, but not exclusively, liberal arts and sciences courses). Completion of these courses is to be recorded on the GETA. If an A.A.S. student transfers, the completed SUNY GE categories and associated credits recorded on the GETA are guaranteed to transfer as described in the 2013 Seamless Transfer policy for A.A., A.S., and baccalaureate programs. Under no circumstances should a general education course be denied transfer solely due to the fact that it is part of an A.A.S. program.
  - b. For A.O.S. programs, disciplinary expectations, the NYSED limitation on liberal arts and sciences courses for the degree, and the credit cap for associate degree programs introduce a significant challenge to the development of general education courses for which the SUNY GE learning outcomes are foundational to the course. Instead, for A.O.S. programs, campuses are likely to need to embed across the curriculum the SUNY GE learning outcomes for the required Knowledge and Skills areas. Embedding, in this instance, is defined as designing a course primarily to meet specific occupational objectives and to also include aspects of the SUNY GE learning outcomes as part of, but not foundational to, such a course (e.g., an HVAC course that has included in the course content aspects of the DEISJ learning outcomes). Because so few A.O.S. students transfer to baccalaureate programs (approximately 15 per year), there is no need to create a GETA for A.O.S. students. Instead, campuses are to develop internal mechanisms to verify completion of the SUNY GE for A.O.S. students. If an A.O.S. student transfers, the receiving campus is expected to review the student's transcript to determine the transferability of SUNY GE categories and credits through the operational framework of 'hold harmless' provided earlier in this guidance document.
- iii. Local general education requirements beyond the SUNY GE shall not require a transfer student to exceed the number of credits to graduation required of native students in the same program (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.vi.). There shall be no conditions that require a student to repeat successfully completed SUNY General Education Course, content, or credits that would result in extended time-to-degree, unnecessary cost, and/or duplication of effort.
- iv. If a SUNY sending institution certifies that an A.A., A.S., or baccalaureate student has completed SUNY GE in its entirety, then the receiving institution must accept that requirement as being met (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.vii.).
- v. If a SUNY sending institution certifies that an A.A., A.S., A.A.S., or baccalaureate student has completed a SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills area, then the receiving institution must accept that requirement as being met. If the transfer student has completed SUNY GE areas that are different from the SUNY GE areas required by the receiving institution, the receiving institution may require the transfer student to fulfill the additional locally required general education areas if it does not require the transfer student to exceed the number of credits to graduation that are required of students who began their college education at the same institution (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; I.A.viii.). There shall be no conditions that require a student to repeat successfully completed SUNY General Education Courses or credits that result in extended time-to-degree,

- unnecessary cost, and/or duplication of effort.
- vi. Each SUNY campus shall accept credit from transfer students for successfully completing SUNY GE framework courses (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.).
  - vii. A passing grade counts as successful completion for the SUNY GE area at any campus; transfer of credit is guaranteed if a course is successfully completed with a grade of C or above. Each campus has discretion about whether a particular course grade satisfies local graduation requirements outside SUNY GE, provided that the campus treats native and transfer students the same (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.i.) Campuses can choose to accept a grade lower than C. In cases where the student has not achieved a grade of C or better, guaranteeing transfer, but has completed the course with a passing grade of less than a C, the category must be considered to be met even if the course itself does not transfer.
  - viii. Successfully completed Pass/Fail courses may be accepted at the discretion of the campus, but transfer is not guaranteed (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.B.ii.).<sup>5</sup> To support transfer, receiving campuses are encouraged to review the Pass/Fail policies of the sending campus and accept credit where an acceptable minimum grade earned can be established.
  - ix. A sending campus shall provide a transcript, at the request of the student, including the GETA for each transferring A.A., A.S., A.A.S., and baccalaureate student, and a receiving campus shall accept the transcript and GETA as certification of the completion (in full or part) of SUNY GE (MTP Vol. 10, No.1; II.D.iv.). The GETA shall be revised to allow for documentation of completion of both the SUNY GER and the SUNY GE frameworks and shall provide for documentation of the completion of the core competencies as well. In some cases, there may also be a need to document the achievement of specific learning outcomes.
  - x. Campuses are reminded that general education changes may necessitate technical changes to provide for tracking, delivering, and transcription of SUNY GE including any necessary revisions to student information systems, Degree Audit systems, Degree Works, Transfer Finder, and catalogs. It is therefore essential to be engaging with registrars, IT, and IR throughout the planning for this transition to ensure timely and accurate revisions.
  - xi. To address any concerns about course approvability and the transfer of credit, campuses are encouraged to work together to seek resolution. If necessary, campuses or students may submit an appeal to the SUNY's Provost's Office for intervention. Consistent with prior SUNY policy, decisions regarding the transfer of SUNY GE courses can be appealed at the campus and SUNY System level.

### *Student Appeals*

- a. All students who have been accepted or are currently enrolled at SUNY campuses and who do not agree with a campus decision regarding acceptance or placement of general education courses and categories earned elsewhere in SUNY are allowed to appeal. Appeals must start at the campus level, and may proceed to the system level if necessary (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.i.).
- b. Information and instructions regarding campus and system appeals processes shall be posted on campus websites in an easily accessible and understandable manner. Contact information should be made available, including updated information regarding the

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<sup>5</sup> Note exception: See memorandum from Tod A. Laursen, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, April 7, 2020, "Due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding SUNY's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when evaluating general education course credit earned during the Spring 2020 term by incoming transfer students, transfer of credit is guaranteed at all SUNY campuses if a SUNY general education course is successfully completed with any passing grade, including a 'P' in a Pass/Fail grading system." This exception applies only to general education course credit earned during the Spring 2020 term and thus does not impact the revised SUNY General Education requirements described in this guidance.

system-level appeals process (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).

- c. If students do not agree with their local campus decision regarding the appeal, or have not received a campus response in 15 business days, the student may appeal to the SUNY Provost (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).

#### *Campus Appeals to SUNY Provost*

- a. A SUNY receiving campus may appeal having to accept a SUNY GE and/or Transfer Path course from a SUNY sending campus (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.i.).
- b. A sending campus may report a decision by a receiving campus not to accept a SUNY GE or Transfer Path course (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.ii.).
- c. After receiving an appeal request, the SUNY Provost's Office will work with the campuses to resolve the concern (MTP Vol.13, No. 3; III.D.iii.).

### **D. Implementation Timeline and Transition**

The new SUNY General Education is effective with the start of the fall 2023 semester, for new first-time students entering AA-, AS-, and all baccalaureate-degree programs; and effective with the start of the fall 2024 semester, for new first-time students entering AAS- and AOS-degree programs.

For continuing, returning, and transfer students having first entered SUNY as new students prior to the implementation date for this SUNY GE policy, see the Hold Harmless section of this guidance for information in support of successful completion of their undergraduate degree.



## APPENDIX

### SUNY Board of Trustees' Resolution 2021-48, State University of New York General Education Policy

#### MEMORANDUM

November 9, 2021

**TO: Members of the Board of Trustees**

**FROM: Dr. Jim Malatras, Chancellor**

**SUBJECT: State University of New York General Education Policy**

#### Action Requested

The proposed resolution establishes an updated SUNY General Education Framework applicable to all students pursuing a SUNY undergraduate degree. It directs the Chancellor or designee to work with campus leadership and faculty to implement local general education and undergraduate degree program requirements that are consistent with the SUNY General Education Framework, effective fall 2023 for A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate degree programs, and no later than fall 2024 for A.A.S. and A.O.S. degree programs.

#### Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

**Whereas** the mission of the State University of New York is to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of all students, and to address local, regional and state needs and goals; and

**Whereas** the State University is directed to exercise care to develop and maintain a balance of its human and physical resources in meeting its obligation to provide undergraduate education that reflects the opportunity for individual choice and the needs of society, and promotes appropriate program articulation between its State- operated institutions and community colleges; and

**Whereas** by Resolution 98-241, adopted on December 15, 1998, the SUNY Board of Trustees established a SUNY General Education Requirement for all baccalaureate students; and

**Whereas** by Resolution 2010-006, adopted on January 19, 2010, the SUNY Board of Trustees enhanced flexibility in the SUNY General Education Requirement; and

**Whereas** by Resolution 2012-089, adopted on December 17, 2012, the SUNY Board of Trustees included each curriculum leading to an A.A. and A.S. degree in the SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY GER); and

**Whereas** in May 2017, the SUNY Provost convened a broadly representative advisory group, to determine if the SUNY GER needed review, and that group recommended moving forward with such review and offered initial suggestions for a three-phase process; and

**Whereas** Phase I of the SUNY GER review was co-led by the presidents of the University Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges, charged with conducting an environmental scan of national, state, and system models of general education, and accreditation requirements, producing research papers that reported on the general context and made recommendations for consideration in the revision process; and

**Whereas** Phase II was led by the SUNY Provost who empaneled the General Education Advisory Committee, broadly representative and co-chaired by a SUNY Chief Academic Officer and a SUNY Distinguished Faculty Professor, charged with developing initial recommendations for a general education framework in the context of a proposed policy revision, informed by the faculty governance-led work in Phase I; and

**Whereas** the General Education Advisory Committee's initial recommendations for a SUNY General Education Framework was distributed for System-wide comment, and extensive feedback was received and then analyzed in collaboration with faculty governance leaders and other experts, to inform refinements and final recommendations to the SUNY Provost; and

**Whereas** the current SUNY General Education Requirement does not include A.A.S. and A.O.S. degrees; does not align fully with Middle States accreditation standards or NYS Commissioner's regulations, does not address Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice, and is outdated in other ways; and

**Whereas** the SUNY Board of Trustees has elevated the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in SUNY by creating a standing Board Committee, and the Chancellor has made it a top priority for all campuses, faculty, staff, and students by initiating the 25-point Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan that includes general education; and

**Whereas** the proposed SUNY General Education Framework aligns with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation Standards for general education and New York State Education Department liberal arts and sciences requirements for degrees; and

**Whereas** the proposed SUNY General Education Framework's updated knowledge, skills, and core competencies are necessitated by increasingly rapid change in academia, business, and social discourse; and

**Whereas** the proposed SUNY General Education Framework ensures seamless and successful transfer for SUNY students and continues to be consistent with SUNY's strategic and master plans since 1972, and is of central importance to increasing degree completion and closing New York State's degree attainment gap; and

**Whereas** the SUNY General Education Framework should be applicable to all SUNY undergraduate degree programs, to address the fundamental goals of higher education, including proficiency in essential skills, familiarization with disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of knowing, and enhancement of the values and disposition of an engaged 21st century global citizenry; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved** that the Board of Trustees recognizes the broadly representative individuals who participated in the research and design phases of the general education framework process and applauds their hard work and dedication; and, be it further

**Resolved** that the Chancellor or designee be, and hereby is, directed to implement the new SUNY General Education Framework (Phase III), which includes the updated knowledge and skills categories of Communication – written and oral; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; Mathematics (and quantitative reasoning); Natural Sciences (and scientific reasoning); Humanities; Social Sciences; the Arts; US History and Civic Engagement; World History and Global Awareness; and World Languages; as well as the Core Competencies of Critical Thinking and Reasoning; and Information Literacy (see Attachment A); and be it further

**Resolved** that the SUNY Provost develop additional guidance and procedures for implementation in consultation with college presidents, chief academic officers, the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY Student Assembly, and other appropriate stakeholders, effective fall 2023 for new students entering A.A., A.S., and all baccalaureate degree programs, and no later than fall 2024 for new students entering A.A.S. and A.O.S. degree programs; and, be it further

**Resolved** that SUNY System Administration will work with campuses to ensure that faculty have the training and resources to support the teaching and learning needs in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice category; and, be it further

**Resolved** that consistent with the SUNY Assessment policy (Trustees Resolution 2010-039), each campus' regular assessment of its general education curriculum (or curricula) shall include the assessment of student learning in terms of the student learning outcomes associated with the SUNY General Education Framework, such that the assessment meets or exceeds Middle States' expectations and the results are used to improve teaching and learning; and, be it further

**Resolved** that the Chancellor, or designee, be, and hereby is, directed to assess periodically the SUNY General Education Framework, in consultation with presidents, chief academic officers, the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY

Student Assembly, and other appropriate stakeholders, to ensure it remains relevant to changing conditions and the needs of students and businesses; and provide periodic reports of such activity to the SUNY Board of Trustees.

## **Background**

### **I. SUNY General Education Requirement History**

The SUNY Board of Trustees established a 30-credit SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY GER) for all baccalaureate students, including ten required academic areas and two required competency areas, by adopting Resolution 98-241 on December 15, 1998. The purpose was to provide an intellectual foundation, ensure curricular depth, and encourage academic exploration across disciplines.

On January 19, 2010, the Board enhanced flexibility in the SUNY General Education Requirement by adopting Resolution 2010-006. This maintained the required 30-credits but reduced the number of required academic areas from ten to seven, with mathematics and basic communication required, as well as at least five of the following eight academic areas: natural science, social science, American history, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, humanities, the arts, and foreign languages. This enabled students to take multiple courses in some academic areas.

Consistent with SUNY's long-standing commitment to transfer student success and because A.A. and A.S. programs are designed as transfer degrees, in 2012 the Board added those degrees to the current SUNY General Education Requirement by adopting Resolution 2012-089. Thereby, each curriculum leading to an A.A., A.S., and bachelor's degree shall enable students to complete seven of ten SUNY General Education Requirement academic areas (including mathematics and basic communication), two competency areas, and 30 credits of SUNY General Education courses. These requirements are to be completed in the first two years of full-time study (or 60 credits, whichever is greater), so that associate degree students make progress equal to baccalaureate students.

### **II. SUNY General Education Requirement Revision Process**

Recognizing that the SUNY General Education Requirement included outdated language was out of alignment with accreditation requirements in that it did not include some degrees, and that some campuses were revising their local requirements, the SUNY Provost convened a shared governance advisory group, comprised of 12 University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the SUNY Student Assembly governance representatives; six SUNY provosts, three System administrators, and a Distinguished Academy member, to a one-day SUNY General Education Requirement Retreat on 5/23/17, to consider whether SUNY GER needed to be revised. The broadly representative participants at this pre-planning retreat advised that it was time to revisit the SUNY General Education Requirement and offered suggestions for a three-phase comprehensive review process and initial guiding principles.

Phase I of the SUNY GER review was led by the presidents of the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. This working group was composed predominately of faculty selected by the co-chairs and charged with the analysis of national, system, accreditation, and SUNY campus models of general education. After two years of study, the working group produced a White Paper that reported on the larger issues and a Green Paper that made recommendations; and Phase II was led by the SUNY Provost's General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC), co-chaired by a Chief Academic Officer and a Distinguished Teaching Professor, comprised of ten faculty members and a broad representation of other impacted stakeholders, charged with developing initial recommendations for a general education framework in the context of a proposed policy revision (see Attachment B). Informed by the faculty-governance work from Phase 1, the full membership of GEAC reviewed its subcommittee work and prepared a draft General Education Framework which the Provost disseminated throughout the SUNY System, resulting in robust campus feedback. Working collaboratively with faculty governance leaders and other experts, the Provost's team analyzed the voluminous feedback to refine the Framework for the Provost's consideration. On September 8, 2021, Provost-in-Charge Sandvik distributed the refined

SUNY General Education Framework and draft guidance, and invited campus feedback on draft implementation guidance.

Phase III is implementation of the new SUNY General Education Framework (Attachment A). The Phase III implementation plan was adjusted to its current state after consultation with the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and aligning the implementation process with their resolution. Through local shared governance processes, campuses shall implement the SUNY General Education framework in accordance with all applicable SUNY policies, Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation standards, and New York State Education Department regulations and procedures. SUNY System Administration will publish implementation guidance in the form of a Provost's Memorandum to Presidents. Campuses shall refer to these guidelines, which will establish the consistency needed to ensure seamless transfer, while allowing the flexibility for campuses to meet the needs of their students. SUNY Provost Office staff will provide ongoing guidance and continuing oversight of general education policy implementation.