

## General Education Foundations Transition - General Information

### Background

In May of 2014, WVU Faculty Senate approved and endorsed a new general education program. The proposed General Education Foundations (GEF), included approval of the following curriculum changes:

- replacing the existing General Education Curriculum (GEC) with a new arrangement grouped into seven broad areas, with an eighth requirement (Focus) of nine hours;
- rescinding the Writing Requirement and replacing it with development of writing and communication skills as determined by the degree-granting college and/or academic unit; and
- endorsing the [LEAP Outcomes](#) and including integrated assessments of those outcomes, skills, and knowledge within the First-Year Seminar and Capstone courses.

The following Faculty Senate Annex provides detailed information:

<http://facultysenate.wvu.edu/r/download/189707>

### Implementation

- The new GEF will be implemented in the 2016-2017 academic catalog.
- Colleges must have advising plans in place that take into account the new GEF by March of 2016 to be able to advise students during the registration period.
- Many continuing students will need to be able to complete the GEC requirements, and the University will continue to ensure that this is possible. A large proportion of the classes in the current GEC will continue to be part of the new program.
- The Office of the University Registrar's website will continue to provide information on the GEC, including what courses may fulfill specific requirements. Archived editions of previous catalogs are also maintained.

### Guidelines for which General Education Program Students will Follow

- Per **University policy** as stated in the catalog, "A student becomes eligible to graduate when he or she completes the requirements of the University, college or school, and major degree program according to the Undergraduate Catalog in effect at the time the student first entered WVU. With the consent of the student's advisor and dean, a student may choose to meet the conditions published in a later catalog. If a student entered WVU more than seven years previously, the student must complete the requirements in a catalog that is no more than seven years old."
- **New first year students** entering in the fall 2016 term or after will automatically be governed by the new GEF requirements.
- **Continuing students** will remain under the current GEC unless, in consultation with the student's advisor and dean, they decide to update their catalog year for all curricular requirement by adopting the 2016-2017 or later catalog.
- **Returning students** will come back under the catalog from when they originally matriculated to WVU if the catalog is no more than seven years old. In consultation with their advisor and dean, they may decide to adopt a later catalog.
- **Catalog editions cannot be combined.** All University, college/school, degree, major, and any other academic awards must be earned according to the requirements of a single catalog year.
- First Year Seminars and Capstone courses are still required for graduation, but are not part of the new GEF.

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### Purpose

The General Education Foundations (GEF) provides students with academic and intellectual breadth to appreciate the broad context of their actions, their choices, and their world, beyond their major field(s) of study.

WVU aims to help students build the foundational skills and knowledge necessary to reason clearly, communicate effectively, think critically, and contribute to society. The General Education Foundations (GEF) are designed to ensure that students meet these goals through inquiry-based learning across disciplines. In conjunction with a major field, and in consultation with their advisors, students will design programs of study that satisfy the GEF. The GEF works to fulfill the University's goals of (1) creating well-rounded students with a broad base of skills and knowledge, (2) linking together the courses that students take at WVU, and (3) instilling in students a permanent connection to learning and education, giving them the skills to learn what they need outside a formal educational environment. The GEF strives to help students be thoughtful participants in a democratic society, and to achieve the intellectual integration and awareness they will need to adapt to changes and meet challenges in their personal, social, and professional lives.

### Policies Governing This Curriculum

1. Students will take between 31 and 37 credits, organized into eight areas (GEF 01 through GEF 08).
2. Courses used to satisfy requirements of the GEF may also simultaneously satisfy major or other requirements for an undergraduate degree at WVU. Colleges and schools may elect to restrict the number of credits that can be shared between the GEF requirements and others required for their program(s). All undergraduate students must at a minimum complete 120 credits (or higher as established by their degree program) to earn a baccalaureate degree at WVU.
3. In addition to fulfilling seven Areas (GEF 01 through GEF 07) (22-28 credits), students will choose a minimum of three courses (9 credits) to fulfill GEF 08, the Focus. Working in consultation with their advisors, students will select these courses from the list of GEF courses, from any combination of disciplines. This Focus Area may be considered a flexible or concentrated area, depending on the courses chosen. Students should work with advisors to determine the best mix of appropriate classes for the Focus.

### Descriptions of Requirements

GEF courses are grouped according to specific expected outcomes, which are in addition to the AACU LEAP skills that are recognized as institutional objectives.

- **English (6 credits)**

Effective, concise, and clear use of English, in both speech and writing through various media, is essential to success both during the course of study and in a career or future professional life. The English Area ensures that students have understood the fundamentals of communicating in English, and works in tandem with college- or program-based communication requirements.

- Students will demonstrate effective communication in English, completing ENGL 101 and 102 or ENGL 103.

- **Science & Technology (4-6 credits)**

A fundamental grasp of the nature of science is essential for responsible, sustainable, and intelligent interaction with the world. Each of us must be able to evaluate scientific developments, technological advancements, and our evolving natural world in order to thrive.

- Students will apply systematic methods of analysis to the natural and physical world, understand scientific knowledge as empirical, and refer to data as a basis for conclusions.

- **Mathematics & Quantitative Skills (3-4 credits)**

Mathematic and quantitative skills are necessary in education, the workplace, and nearly every field of human endeavor. Quantitatively literate citizens must have the capacity to understand numerical aspects of daily life and apply critical reasoning to data.

- Students will demonstrate effective use of quantitative techniques and practical application of numerical, symbolic, or spatial concepts.

- **Society & Connections (3 credits)**

As global citizens, we must understand human behavior in its many forms and expressions, which may include methods of communication, familial and professional relationships, or our place in social, political, and economic systems. Civic knowledge and engagement are critical to individual, societal, and global survival.

- Students will demonstrate understanding and analysis of human behavior, societal and political organization, or communication.

- **Human Inquiry & the Past (3 credits)**

Human development reminds us of the continued importance of understanding events in a larger context of past experience, philosophical inquiry, or spiritual questing. A fundamental knowledge of our forbears, their successes, mistakes, obsessions, and weaknesses allow us to progress. A fundamental grasp of the realm of human thought, reason, ethics, or beliefs enables us understand our world and ourselves.

- Students will interpret historical events or philosophical perspectives to identify patterns, develop analytical reasoning, apply methods of critical inquiry or expand problem-solving skills.

- **The Arts & Creativity (3 credits)**

Creativity, as expressed through works of art, is a defining human characteristic. Regardless of the medium, art communicates and connects us to human innovations and achievements of the past, present, and shared future. Artistic expression employs integrative and creative thinking that promotes transformative ideas capable of crossing disciplinary and cultural boundaries.

- Students will apply methods and principles of critical and creative inquiry to the production or analysis of works of art.

- **Global Studies & Diversity (3 credits)**

The world is more than our familiar neighborhoods and people who share our individual beliefs and traditions. We can come to appreciate our global society when we consider other ways of life, experiences, means of expression, histories, and modes of being. As we seek to expand our knowledge beyond the confines of our own experiences, we open up our minds and our worlds. Embracing human diversity enriches our understanding, including the understanding of what we have in common.

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- Students will apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to explore global issues and cultural, linguistic, or experiential diversity.

- **Focus. (9 credits)**

The GEF designates 9 credits (normally 3 three-credit courses) of Focus coursework. Working with their advisors, students will select three additional courses from the list of those approved for the GEF to maximize connections, incorporate additional competencies, and encourage true breadth of study. Such courses may lead to a minor or even a second major, and are intended to help students capitalize on the range and diversity of courses offered at WVU.