

General Education Reform in New Mexico

General Education: Building a Foundation for Learning

A statewide general education steering committee has been meeting since February of 2016 to revitalize general education in New Mexico. Early on, the committee made a decision that general education would focus on five essential skills: critical thinking, communication, quantitative reasoning, personal and social responsibility, and information literacy. An essential skills focus is consistent with the LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) initiative of the American Association of Universities and Colleges. After further deliberation, the committee decided that the essential skills would be taught in six content areas that have traditionally been associated with a liberal arts education: Communication; Science; Mathematics; Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; and, Creative and Fine Arts.

In combination with other courses that lead to a baccalaureate degree, the revised General Education curriculum should produce a mind that can learn throughout a lifetime, appreciate the natural world and technological innovations, think through issues that confront democracies, and provide leadership in the community and the workplace.

The General Education Core Curriculum is divided into foundational and reinforcing courses. Foundational courses introduce essential skills at a college level, and taking these courses facilitate development of that skill throughout the rest of the curriculum. Reinforcing courses provide the opportunity for skills learned in foundational courses to be re-introduced and strengthened.

All general education courses will transfer among higher education institutions in the state of New Mexico, in accordance with state law. The New Mexico Higher Education Department maintains the complete list of approved courses (<http://www.hed.state.nm.us/institutions/general-ed-core-course-transfer-curriculum.aspx>).

General Education Course Requirements: See also worksheet

Foundational Courses: Six general education courses are foundational. These courses each introduce one essential skill at a college level, and all five essential skills must be represented among the foundational courses a student takes. There are six courses because students must take two courses that focus on the essential skill of communication. The essential skills are taught within six content areas. In some cases, the content area is associated with a single essential skill (e.g., mathematics and quantitative reasoning). Other content areas may have courses that focus on different essential skills. For example, one science course may focus on critical thinking, while another science course may focus on personal and social responsibility. Each foundational course will clearly identify its essential skill focus. The foundational courses must satisfy the following content distribution:

- Two courses must be in Communication
- One course must be in Quantitative reasoning and must come from the Mathematics (includes Statistics) Content Area
- One course must be from the Science Content Area and include a laboratory
- The remaining two courses must be from two of the three following Content Areas: Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; or Creative and Fine Arts.

Reinforcing Courses: Four reinforcing courses provide the opportunity for skills learned in one area to be reinforced in another area. These courses focus on two skills and meet the following requirements:

- Each of the five essential skills is represented at least once among the four courses a student takes
- Each of the four courses must come from a different Content Area (communication, the sciences, mathematics, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and creative and fine arts)

General Education Planning Worksheet

This checklist is intended to help you plan and track courses needed to fulfill your general education requirement.

Foundational Courses

To fulfill the foundational courses requirement, you must have:

- One course from each essential skill except Communication. Two Communication courses are required.
- One course in Quantitative Reasoning from the Mathematics (includes Statistics) Content Area
- One course with a Laboratory in the Science Content Area
- The remaining two courses must be from two of the three following content areas: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, or Creative and Fine Arts.

Instructions: List each Foundational General Education Course in the column labeled "Course". According to their classification in the Undergraduate Catalog, put a check under the Essential Skill for that course and a check under the Content Area for that course.

Course	Essential Skill					Content Area					
	Communication	Quantitative Reasoning	Critical Thinking	Personal & Social Responsibility	Information Literacy	Communications	Science	Mathematics	Humanities	Social & Behavioral Sci.	Creative & Fine Arts
Credits required	6	3	3	3	3	6	4	3	0-3	0-3	0-3
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											

Reinforcing Courses

List each General Education Elective in the column labeled "Course". According to their classification in the Undergraduate Catalog, list the Content Area and put a check under the Essential Skills (each course will have two) for that course.

- Each Essential Skill must be covered by at least one course
- Each of the four courses must come from a different content area.

Course	Content Area	Essential Skill				
		Communication	Quantitative Reasoning	Critical Thinking	Personal & Social Responsibility	Information Literacy
1						
2						
3						
4						