

# **Tennessee Board of Regents**

## **Proposal for the Establishment of a Lower Division General Education Core**

Created by:

The *Ad Hoc* Committee charged to Establish a Lower Division General  
Education Core Curriculum as indicated in Defining Our Future

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## **Tennessee Board of Regents Philosophy of General Education**

The purpose of the Tennessee Board of Regents' general education core is to ensure that college students have the broad knowledge and skills to become life-long learners in a global community that will continue to change. Because courses in general education should emphasize breadth, they should not be reduced in design to the skills, techniques, or procedures associated with a specific occupation or profession. As a fundamental element of the baccalaureate degree, essential for full completion of all majors and minors, the general education core is included in lower division courses, but universities may add general education courses at the upper division as well.

General education provides critical thinking skills for analysis to continue to seek truths, to discover answers to questions, and to solve problems. Specifically, educated people practice and are literate in the various methods of communication. They recognize their place in the history, culture, and diverse heritages of Tennessee, the United States, and the world. They appreciate the web of commonality of all humans in a multicultural world and are prepared for the responsibilities of an engaged citizenship. They recognize the ethical demands of our common lives. They demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences to analyze their contemporary world. They are familiar with the history and aesthetics of the fine arts. They understand and practice the scientific and mathematical view of the world.

Finally, Tennessee's general education core provides for its citizens the means to make a better living. It also, perhaps above all, enables its citizens to make a better life.

## Tennessee Board of Regents

### Lower Division Core Requirements for General Education

The new lower division general education core will replace the current TBR 32 hour minimum degree requirement. Each category is defined by a goal and learning outcomes. In order to satisfy a general education category requirement the institution must be able to document that the required minimum number of learning outcomes for a specific category are met by the selected course(s).

- **Associate Degrees (A.A.\* and A.S.) and Baccalaureate Degrees**

Communication	9 hours **
Humanities and/or Fine Arts	9 hours (One course must be in literature)
Social/Behavioral Sciences	6 hours
History	6 hours
Natural Sciences	8 hours
Mathematics	<u>3 hours</u>
	41 hours

\*Foreign language courses will be an additional requirement for the A. A. and B. A. degrees as presently prescribed in TBR policy 2:01:00:00, Undergraduate Degree Requirements.

\*\*Six (6) hours of English Composition and three (3) hours in English oral presentational communication.

- **Associate of Applied Science (A. A. S.) Degrees**

English Composition	3 hours
*Humanities and/or Fine Arts	3 hours
*Social/Behavioral Sciences	3 hours
*Natural Science/Mathematics	3 hours
*One additional course from the Categories of Communication, Humanities and/or Fine Arts, Social/Behavioral Sciences, or Natural Science/Mathematics	<u>3 to 4 hours</u>
	15 to 17 hours

\* Specific courses satisfying these requirements must be the same courses that satisfy the general education requirement for the Associate (A.A./A.S.) and Baccalaureate degrees.

**Tennessee Board of Regents**  
**General Education Program Course Parameters**

**SACS Requirements**

*The institution...offers a general education program that:*

- 1) Is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree
- 2) Ensures breadth of knowledge (Courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.)
- 3) Is based on coherent rationale

Each institution must:

- a. Define and publish the general education and major program requirements.
- b. Identify competencies within the general education core and provide evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies.

**Characteristics of General Education Courses**

General education course work is designed to provide a foundation and a context in which upper division learning and work in the major take place. It is the general education component that gives the college degree integrity and distinguishes it from a credential. The SACS Criteria for 2004 (Principles of Accreditation) stipulate that the courses in a general education program “do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.” Consequently, general education courses are not deliberately designed to meet pre-major requirements or to support solely the needs of a specific major or program. Institutions may wish to include such more narrowly focused courses in a separate pre-major, liberal studies component.

The goals and objectives for each TBR general education category give clear indication of the criteria which general education courses must meet. The following summaries per category are designed to clarify what is and what is not an appropriate or acceptable general education course.

## General Education Outcomes for Communication

**Goal:** The goal of the Communication requirement is to enhance the effective use of the English language essential to students' success in school and in the world by way of learning to read and listen critically and to write and speak thoughtfully, clearly, coherently, and persuasively.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Analyze and evaluate oral and/or written expression by listening and reading critically for elements that reflect an awareness of situation, audience, purpose, and diverse points of view.
2. Distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement and order and develop major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose.
3. Develop appropriate rhetorical patterns (i.e. narration, example, process, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition, argumentation) and other special functions (i.e., analysis or research), while demonstrating writing and/or speaking skills from process to product.
4. Understand that the writing and/or speaking processes include procedures such as planning, organizing, composing, revising, and editing.
5. Make written and/or oral presentations employing correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
6. Manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources for the purposes of problem solving and decision-making.
7. Recognize the use of evidence, analysis, and persuasive strategies, including basic distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.

For the purpose of the Communication requirement, courses will come from such areas as English composition, oral presentational communication, and other areas emphasizing communicating to an audience. This requirement does not include course work in areas such as writing intensive courses in disciplines like literature, history, or philosophy.

*All learning outcomes must be satisfied by any course(s) in this category.*

## General Education Outcomes for Humanities and/or Fine Arts

**Goal:** The goal of the Humanities and/or Fine Arts requirement is to enhance the understanding of students who, as citizens and educated members of their communities, need to know and appreciate their own human cultural heritage and its development in a historical and global context. Also, through study of Humanities and/or Fine Arts, students will develop an understanding, which they otherwise would not have, of the present as informed by the past.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Analyze significant primary texts and works of art, ancient, pre-modern, and modern, as forms of cultural and creative expression.
2. Explain the ways in which humanistic and/or artistic expression throughout the ages expresses the culture and values of its time and place.
3. Explore global/cultural diversity.
4. Frame a comparative context through which they can critically assess the ideas, forces, and values that have created the modern world.
5. Recognize the ways in which both change and continuity have affected human history.
6. Practice the critical and analytical methodologies of the Humanities and/or Fine Arts.

For the purposes of Humanities and/or Fine Arts requirement, courses will come from the areas of Art, Dance, Literature, Philosophy, Music, Theatre, and those offerings from other disciplines that also include, among other criteria, analytical study of primary texts and/or works of art as forms of cultural and creative expression. This requirement does not include work in areas such as studio and performance courses or courses that are primarily skills oriented.

*Course(s) satisfying this category must meet four (4) or more of the learning outcomes.*

## General Education Outcomes for Social/Behavioral Sciences

**Goal:** The goal of the Social/Behavioral Sciences requirement is (a) to develop in the student an understanding of self and the world by examining the content and processes used by social and behavioral sciences to discover, describe, explain, and predict human behavior and social systems; (b) to enhance knowledge of social and cultural institutions and the values of this society and other societies and cultures in the world; and (c) to understand the interdependent nature of the individual, family, and society in shaping human behavior and determining quality of life.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Recognize, describe, and explain social institutions, structures, and processes and the complexities of a global culture and diverse society.
2. Think critically about how individuals are influenced by political, geographic, economic, cultural, and family institutions in their own and other diverse cultures and explain how one's own belief system may differ from others.
3. Explore the relationship between the individual and society as it affects the personal behavior, social development and quality of life of the individual, the family and the community.
4. Examine the impact of behavioral and social scientific research on major contemporary issues and their disciplines' effects on individuals and society.
5. Using the most appropriate principles, methods, and technologies, perceptively and objectively gather, analyze, and present social and behavioral science research data, draw logical conclusions, and apply those conclusions to one's life and society.
6. Take ethical stands based on appropriate research in the social and behavioral sciences.
7. Analyze and communicate the values and processes that are used to formulate theories regarding the social context of individual human behavior in the social and behavioral sciences.

For the purposes of the Social/Behavioral Sciences requirement, courses will be expected from areas such as anthropology, economics, geography, psychology, political science, and sociology. One course in health/wellness may be included in this category.

*Course(s) satisfying this category must meet four (4) or more of the learning outcomes.*

## General Education Outcomes for History

**Goal:** The goal of the History requirement is to develop in students an understanding of the present that is informed by an awareness of past heritages, including the complex and interdependent relationships between cultures and societies.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Analyze historical facts and interpretations.
2. Analyze and compare political, geographic, economic, social, cultural, religious and intellectual institutions, structures, and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.
3. Recognize and articulate the diversity of human experience across a range of historical periods and the complexities of a global culture and society.
4. Draw on historical perspective to evaluate contemporary problems/issues.
5. Analyze the contributions of past cultures/societies to the contemporary world.

For universities: Two courses in American History are required for all degree programs not exempted from Chapter 767 of the Public Acts of 1974. Tennessee History (HIST 2030) may substitute for one semester of American History.

For community colleges: Two Courses in history are required, to be selected from Western Civilization or World Civilization or World History or American History (HIST 2030 may substitute for one semester of American History). Students at community colleges should take the history courses appropriate for their intended majors at the receiving institution.

*All learning outcomes must be satisfied by any course(s) in this category.*



## General Education Outcomes for Natural Sciences

**Goal:** Issues in today's world require scientific information and a scientific approach to informed decision making. Therefore, the goal of the Natural Science requirement is to guide students toward becoming scientifically literate. This scientific understanding gained in these courses enhances students' ability to define and solve problems, reason with an open mind, think critically and creatively, suspend judgment, and make decisions that may have local or global significance.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Conduct an experiment, collect and analyze data, and interpret results in a laboratory setting.
2. Analyze, evaluate and test a scientific hypothesis.
3. Use basic scientific language and processes, and be able to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific explanations.
4. Identify unifying principles and repeatable patterns in nature, the values of natural diversity, and apply them to problems or issues of a scientific nature.
5. Analyze and discuss the impact of scientific discovery on human thought and behavior.

For the purposes of Natural Science, courses will come from areas such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, geology, and interdisciplinary studies in science. A significant laboratory experience is required. Courses that are narrowly focused and those introductory or foundational science courses designed primarily as prerequisites or foundational experiences leading to a major in professional science areas are not eligible for inclusion.

*All learning outcomes must be satisfied by any course(s) in this category.*

## General Education Outcomes for Mathematics

**Goal:** To expand students' understanding of mathematics beyond the entry level requirements for college and to extend their knowledge of mathematics through relevant mathematical modeling with applications, problem solving, critical thinking skills, and the use of appropriate technologies.

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to.....</b>
1. Build on (not replicate) the competencies gained through the study of two years of high school algebra and one year of high school geometry.
2. Use mathematics to solve problems and determine if the solutions are reasonable.
3. Use mathematics to model real world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.
4. Make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.
5. Use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.
6. Apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.

For the purposes of the mathematics requirement courses should extend the students' understanding beyond the competencies of high school Algebra II. Any course that meets the general education requirement must satisfy all of the learning outcomes for the goal. Students at the community college level are encouraged to take the math course appropriate for their intended major at the receiving institution.

*All learning outcomes must be satisfied by any course(s) in this category.*

## **Principles of Administration and Accountability for the General Education Program**

### ***Administration of the General Education Program***

A General Education Committee will be established at each institution. The purpose of this committee will be to monitor internally all courses within the General Education Program and ensure that the courses satisfy the goals and learning outcomes for each category established by the General Education requirements. This Committee will represent the faculty as a whole, not disciplines or departments, and will report directly to the chief academic officer.

Responsibilities of the committee will include:

- Developing a methodology for evaluating and recommending that courses satisfy the general education requirements.
- Accepting and approving courses satisfying the general education requirements.
- Assuring all general education requirements are met for all degree programs.
- Developing assessment strategies for each category of the general education core requirements.
- Assisting the chief academic officer with the program assessment of general education by documenting outcomes.

### ***Accountability to the Tennessee Board of Regents***

- Each institution must provide a methodology for selection and assessment of the courses which meet the category requirements for the general education core. This methodology will be reviewed by a statewide General Education Committee.
- A **limited** number of courses is expected to satisfy the general education core.
- Each institution must provide the TBR Academic Affairs office with a list of courses that satisfies the general education core requirements in each

category. The TBR staff has the responsibility to inquire concerning any course that may be questionable concerning a particular general education category.

- Upon completion of an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree, the requirements for the lower division general education core will be complete and accepted by the four-year institution upon transfer.
- If an associate degree is not obtained, each institution must accept transfer of general education courses based on fulfillment of complete categories. (Example: If all 8 hours in the category of Natural Science are complete, this “block” of the general education core is complete.) When a category is incomplete, course-by-course evaluation will be conducted.