

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 21st 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 21st 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. Finally, the framework 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 COMPETENCIES

1. Knowledge and Skills Areas (**a minimum of 7 of 10 categories of knowledge and skills are required**)

The following four are required

Communication – written and oral

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Mathematics (and quantitative reasoning)

Natural Sciences (and scientific reasoning)¹

In addition, a minimum of three of the following six are required

Humanities

Social Sciences

The Arts

US History and Civic Engagement

World History and Global Awareness

World Languages

2. Core Competencies – **both required**

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

Information Literacy

¹ Campuses may approve substitutions for this requirement, as explained in the category description below.

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; it is also consistent with institutional accreditation requirements² and applicable New York State Education Department Commissioner Regulations and curriculum expectations.³

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

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

- At least 30 credits of SUNY GE-approved Liberal Arts and Sciences
- A minimum of seven (of ten) Knowledge and Skills Areas, including the four specifically required
- 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 must also be included in AAS degrees.

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

- At least 20 credits of SUNY GE-approved Liberal Arts and Sciences
- A minimum of the four (of ten) specifically required Knowledge and Skills Areas
- 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-approved liberal arts and sciences courses and/or embedding required general education content into applied courses, curriculum 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-approved Liberal Arts and Sciences
- A minimum of the four (of ten) specifically required SUNY GE Knowledge and Skills Areas (freestanding or embedded)
- The two core competencies (freestanding or embedded)

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, AND CORE COMPETENCIES

The 12 categories of the SUNY General Education Framework—ten Knowledge and Skills Areas and two Core Competencies—are detailed in the pages that follow. Note that student learning outcomes for each category are intentionally broad, to ensure seamless transfer as well as faculty flexibility. (See also separate draft *Implementation Guidance for SUNY General Education* for more detail.)

² Middle States Commission on Higher Education <https://www.msche.org/>

³ See NYSED, <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-curriculum#>

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS

Communication – Written and Oral

(Required)

I. Label

Communication – Written and Oral

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

(Required)

I. Label

Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)

(Required)

I. Label

Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)

(Required)

I. Label

Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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 (or physical) sciences.

Humanities

I. Label

Humanities

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Social Sciences

I. Label

Social Sciences

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

The Arts

I. Label

The Arts

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Students will

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

US History and Civic Engagement

I. Label

US History and Civic Engagement

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

World History and Global Awareness

I. Label

World History and Global Awareness

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

World Languages

I. Label

World Languages

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COMPETENCIES

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

(Required)

I. Label

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Information Literacy

(Required)

I. Label

Information Literacy

II. Student Learning Outcomes

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.

**SUNY General Education Framework Compared to Current SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER)
and Middle States Commission on Higher Education Identified Skills and Proficiencies**

SUNY General Education Framework	Current SUNY-GER	MSCHE Skills and Proficiencies
Communication – Written and Oral	Basic Communication	Written and Oral Communication
Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice	n/a	Diverse Perspectives, Cultural Sensitivity, Values & Ethics
Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning)	Mathematics	Quantitative Reasoning
Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning)	Natural Sciences	Scientific Reasoning
Humanities	Humanities	Values & Ethics, Diverse Perspectives, Global Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity
Social Sciences	Social Sciences	Cultural Sensitivity, Diverse Perspectives, Global Awareness, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Reasoning
The Arts	The Arts	Diverse Perspectives, Global Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Values and Ethics
U.S. History and Civic Engagement	American History	Cultural Sensitivity, Diverse Perspectives, Critical Analysis and Reasoning
World History and Global Awareness	Western Civilization Other World Civilizations	Cultural Sensitivity, Diverse Perspectives, Global Awareness, Values & Ethics,
World Languages	Foreign Language	Cultural Sensitivity, Diverse Perspectives, Global Awareness, Values & Ethics,
Critical Thinking and Reasoning	Critical Thinking (Reasoning)	Critical Analysis and Reasoning
Information Literacy	Information Management	Information Literacy

Knowledge and Skills Areas

Core Competencies